

STATE OF NEW YORK

7613

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

May 25, 2023

Introduced by M. of A. STERN -- read once and referred to the Committee on Governmental Employees

AN ACT to amend the retirement and social security law, in relation to the retirement of members employed as an emergency medical technician, critical care technician, advanced emergency medical technician, paramedic or supervisor of such titles in a participating Suffolk county fire district

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The retirement and social security law is amended by adding
2 a new section 89-ss to read as follows:

3 § 89-ss. Retirement of members employed as an emergency medical tech-
4 nician, critical care technician, advanced emergency medical technician,
5 paramedic or supervisor of such titles in a participating Suffolk county
6 fire district. a. Any member employed as an emergency medical techni-
7 cian, critical care technician, advanced emergency medical technician,
8 paramedic or supervisor of such titles upon an election by a participat-
9 ing Suffolk county fire district shall be eligible to retire pursuant to
10 the provisions of this section. Such eligibility shall be an alternative
11 to the eligibility provisions available under any other plan of this
12 article to which such member is subject.

13 b. Such member shall be entitled to retire upon the completion of
14 twenty-five years of total creditable service by filing an application
15 therefor in the manner provided for in section seventy of this article.

16 c. Upon completion of twenty-five years of such service and upon
17 retirement, each such member shall receive a pension which, together
18 with an annuity which shall be the actuarial equivalent of his or her
19 accumulated contributions at the time of his or her retirement and an
20 additional pension which is the actuarial equivalent of the reserved-
21 for-increased-take-home-pay to which he or she may then be entitled

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 shall be sufficient to provide him or her with a retirement allowance
2 equal to one-half of his or her final average salary.

3 d. As used in this section "creditable service" shall include any and
4 all services performed as an emergency medical technician, critical care
5 technician, advanced emergency medical technician, paramedic or supervi-
6 sor of such titles employed by a participating Suffolk county fire
7 district.

8 e. Credit for service as a paid firefighter or officer of any organ-
9 ized fire department shall also be deemed to be creditable service and
10 shall be included in computing years of total service for retirement
11 pursuant to this section.

12 f. A member contributing on the basis of this section at the time of
13 retirement, may retire after the completion of twenty-five years of
14 total creditable service. Application therefor may be filed in a manner
15 similar to that provided in section seventy of this article. Upon
16 completion of twenty-five years of such service and upon retirement,
17 each such member shall receive a pension which, together with an annuity
18 which shall be the actuarial equivalent of his or her accumulated
19 contributions at the time of his or her retirement and an additional
20 pension which is the actuarial equivalent of the reserved-for-in-
21 creased-take-home-pay to which he or she may then be entitled shall be
22 sufficient to provide him or her with a retirement allowance equal to
23 one-half of his or her final average salary; for service beyond twenty-
24 five years the benefit is increased by one-sixtieth of final average
25 salary for each year of additional service credit provided, however,
26 that the total allowance payable pursuant to this section shall not
27 exceed three-fourths of such member's final average salary.

28 g. In computing the twenty-five years of total service of a member
29 pursuant to this section full credit shall be given and full allowance
30 shall be made for service of such member in time of war after World War
31 I as defined in section two of this chapter, provided such member at the
32 time of his or her entrance into the armed forces was employed by a
33 participating Suffolk county fire district.

34 h. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent a member, who
35 does not retire pursuant to the provisions of this section, from utiliz-
36 ing service which is creditable service pursuant to the provisions of
37 this section for service credit pursuant to the provisions of any other
38 plan of this article to which such member is subject.

39 i. The provisions of this section shall be controlling notwithstanding
40 any other provision of this article to the contrary.

41 j. Any member who, on or before the effective date of this section, is
42 employed as an emergency medical technician, critical care technician,
43 advanced emergency medical technician, paramedic or supervisor of such
44 titles in a participating Suffolk county fire district may, by filing an
45 election within one year after the effective date of this section,
46 elect to be subject to the provisions of this section. Such election
47 shall be in writing, shall be duly executed and filed with the comp-
48 troller and shall be irrevocable.

49 § 2. Subdivision a of section 445 of the retirement and social securi-
50 ty law, as separately amended by section 4 of part II and section 2 of
51 part KK of chapter 55 of the laws of 2023, is amended to read as
52 follows:

53 a. No member of a retirement system who is subject to the provisions
54 of this article shall retire without regard to age, exclusive of retire-
55 ment for disability, unless he or she is a police officer, an investi-
56 gator member of the New York city employees' retirement system, fire-

1 fighter, correction officer, a qualifying member as defined in section
2 eighty-nine-t, as added by chapter six hundred fifty-seven of the laws
3 of nineteen hundred ninety-eight, of this chapter, sanitation worker, a
4 special officer (including persons employed by the city of New York in
5 the title urban park ranger or associate urban park ranger), school
6 safety agent, campus peace officer or a taxi and limousine commission
7 inspector member of the New York city employees' retirement system or
8 the New York city board of education retirement system, a dispatcher
9 member of the New York city employees' retirement system, a police
10 communications member of the New York city employees' retirement system,
11 an EMT member of the New York city employees' retirement system, a depu-
12 ty sheriff member of the New York city employees' retirement system, a
13 correction officer of the Westchester county correction department as
14 defined in section eighty-nine-e of this chapter or employed in Suffolk
15 county as a peace officer, as defined in section eighty-nine-s, as added
16 by chapter five hundred eighty-eight of the laws of nineteen hundred
17 ninety-seven, of this chapter, employed in Suffolk county as a
18 correction officer, as defined in section eighty-nine-f of this chapter,
19 or employed in Nassau county as a correction officer, uniformed
20 correction division personnel, sheriff, undersheriff or deputy sheriff,
21 as defined in section eighty-nine-g of this chapter, or employed in
22 Nassau county as an ambulance medical technician, an ambulance medical
23 technician/supervisor or a member who performs ambulance medical techni-
24 cian related services, or a police medic, police medic supervisor or a
25 member who performs police medic related services, as defined in section
26 eighty-nine-s, as amended by chapter five hundred seventy-eight of the
27 laws of nineteen hundred ninety-eight, of this chapter, or employed in
28 Nassau county as a peace officer, as defined in section eighty-nine-s,
29 as added by chapter five hundred ninety-five of the laws of nineteen
30 hundred ninety-seven, of this chapter, or employed in Albany county as a
31 sheriff, undersheriff, deputy sheriff, correction officer or identifica-
32 tion officer, as defined in section eighty-nine-h of this chapter or is
33 employed in St. Lawrence county as a sheriff, undersheriff, deputy sher-
34 iff or correction officer, as defined in section eighty-nine-i of this
35 chapter or is employed in Orleans county as a sheriff, undersheriff,
36 deputy sheriff or correction officer, as defined in section
37 eighty-nine-l of this chapter or is employed in Jefferson county as a
38 sheriff, undersheriff, deputy sheriff or correction officer, as defined
39 in section eighty-nine-j of this chapter or is employed in Onondaga
40 county as a deputy sheriff-jail division competitively appointed or as a
41 correction officer, as defined in section eighty-nine-k of this chapter
42 or is employed in a county which makes an election under subdivision j
43 of section eighty-nine-p of this chapter as a sheriff, undersheriff,
44 deputy sheriff or correction officer as defined in such section eighty-
45 nine-p or is employed in Broome County as a sheriff, undersheriff, depu-
46 ty sheriff or correction officer, as defined in section eighty-nine-m of
47 this chapter or is a Monroe county deputy sheriff-court security, or
48 deputy sheriff-jailor as defined in section eighty-nine-n, as added by
49 chapter five hundred ninety-seven of the laws of nineteen hundred nine-
50 ty-one, of this chapter or is employed in Greene county as a sheriff,
51 undersheriff, deputy sheriff or correction officer, as defined in
52 section eighty-nine-o of this chapter or is a traffic officer with the
53 town of Elmira as defined in section eighty-nine-q of this chapter or is
54 employed by Suffolk county as a park police officer, as defined in
55 section eighty-nine-r of this chapter or is a peace officer employed by
56 a county probation department as defined in section eighty-nine-t, as

1 added by chapter six hundred three of the laws of nineteen hundred nine-
2 ty-eight, of this chapter or is employed in Rockland county as a deputy
3 sheriff-civil as defined in section eighty-nine-v of this chapter as
4 added by chapter four hundred forty-one of the laws of two thousand one,
5 or is employed in Rockland county as a superior correction officer as
6 defined in section eighty-nine-v of this chapter as added by chapter
7 five hundred fifty-six of the laws of two thousand one or is a paramedic
8 employed by the police department in the town of Tonawanda and retires
9 under the provisions of section eighty-nine-v of this chapter, as added
10 by chapter four hundred seventy-two of the laws of two thousand one, or
11 is a county fire marshal, supervising fire marshal, fire marshal,
12 assistant fire marshal, assistant chief fire marshal, chief fire
13 marshal, division supervising fire marshal or fire marshal trainee
14 employed by the county of Nassau as defined in section eighty-nine-w of
15 this chapter or is employed in Monroe county as a deputy sheriff-civil
16 as defined in section eighty-nine-x of this chapter, employed as an
17 emergency medical technician, critical care technician, advanced emer-
18 gency medical technician, paramedic or supervisor of such titles in a
19 participating Suffolk county fire district as defined in section eight-
20 y-nine-ss of this chapter, and is in a plan which permits immediate
21 retirement upon completion of a specified period of service without
22 regard to age. Except as provided in subdivision c of section four
23 hundred forty-five-a of this article, subdivision c of section four
24 hundred forty-five-b of this article, subdivision c of section four
25 hundred forty-five-c of this article, subdivision c of section four
26 hundred forty-five-d of this article, subdivision c of section four
27 hundred forty-five-e of this article, subdivision c of section four
28 hundred forty-five-f of this article and subdivision c of section four
29 hundred forty-five-h of this article, a member in such a plan and such
30 an occupation, other than a police officer or investigator member of the
31 New York city employees' retirement system or a firefighter, shall not
32 be permitted to retire prior to the completion of twenty-five years of
33 credited service; provided, however, if such a member in such an occupa-
34 tion is in a plan which permits retirement upon completion of twenty
35 years of service regardless of age, he or she may retire upon completion
36 of twenty years of credited service and prior to the completion of twen-
37 ty-five years of service, but in such event the benefit provided from
38 funds other than those based on such a member's own contributions shall
39 not exceed two per centum of final average salary per each year of cred-
40 ited service.

41 § 3. Section 603 of the retirement and social security law is amended
42 by adding a new subdivision v to read as follows:

43 v. The service retirement benefit specified in section six hundred
44 four of this article shall be payable to members with twenty-five years
45 of creditable service, without regard to age, who are employed by a
46 participating fire district that makes the election provided for in
47 subdivision j of section eighty-nine-ss of this chapter as an emergency
48 medical technician, critical care technician, advanced emergency medical
49 technician, paramedic or supervisor of such titles in a participating
50 Suffolk county fire district as defined in section eighty-nine-ss of
51 this chapter if: (i) such members have met the minimum service require-
52 ments upon retirement; and (ii) in the case of a member subject to the
53 provisions of article fourteen of this chapter, such member files an
54 election therefor which provides that he or she will be subject to the
55 provisions of this article and to none of the provisions of such article
56 fourteen. Such election, which shall be irrevocable, shall be in writ-

ing, duly executed and shall be filed with the comptroller within one year of the effective date of this subdivision or within one year after entering the employment with the participating Suffolk county fire district upon which eligibility is based, whichever comes later. For the purposes of this subdivision, the term "creditable service" shall have the meaning as so defined in both sections eighty-nine-ss and six hundred one of this chapter.

§ 4. Section 604 of the retirement and social security law is amended by adding a new subdivision v to read as follows:

v. The early service retirement benefit for a member who is employed by a participating fire district that makes the election provided for in subdivision j of section eighty-nine-ss of this chapter as an emergency medical technician, critical care technician, advanced emergency medical technician, paramedic or supervisor of such titles in a participating Suffolk county fire district as defined in section eighty-nine-ss of this chapter shall be a pension equal to one-fiftieth of final average salary times years of credited service at the completion of twenty-five years of service as such participating Suffolk county fire district emergency medical technician, critical care technician, advanced emergency medical technician, paramedic or supervisor of such titles, but not exceeding one-half of his or her final average salary; for service beyond twenty-five years the benefits shall increase by one-sixtieth of final average salary for each year of additional service credit provided, however, that the total allowance payable pursuant to this section shall not exceed three-fourths of such member's final average salary.

§ 5. All past service costs associated with implementing the provisions of this act shall be borne by the participating Suffolk county fire district.

§ 6. This act shall take effect immediately.

FISCAL NOTE.--Pursuant to Legislative Law, Section 50:

This bill would allow fire districts in Suffolk County that participate in the New York State and Local Employees' Retirement System to elect to provide individuals employed in the title of emergency medical technician, advanced emergency medical technician, critical care technician, or paramedic, and supervisors of these titles, the option to retire upon completion of twenty-five years of creditable service with a benefit of one-half of final average salary (FAS) and an additional benefit of one-sixtieth of FAS for each year of creditable service in excess of twenty-five years. Members in Tiers 3 -- 6 would be limited to 15 years of additional one-sixtieths.

Additionally, for those members covered under the provisions of Article 14, this bill would permit an irrevocable election to forfeit the benefits of Article 14 in favor of the 25-year plan benefit established by this legislation. Such election must be made within one year of the effective date of this bill or within one year of entering service with an electing fire district, whichever comes later.

If this bill is enacted during the 2023 legislative session, we anticipate that there will be an increase in the annual contributions of an affected fire district of approximately 5% of salary paid to employees in covered titles for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024. In future years, this cost will vary as the billing rates of the affected members change.

In addition to the annual contributions discussed above, there will be an immediate past service cost of approximately 20% of salary paid to employees in covered titles, which will be borne by the electing fire

district as a one-time payment. This estimate assumes that payment will be made on February 1, 2024.

Further, we anticipate administrative costs to implement the provisions of this legislation.

The exact number of current members as well as future members who could be affected by this legislation cannot be readily determined. Prior to electing to provide these benefits, an eligible fire district would be required to submit a roster of individuals in covered titles to the New York State and Local Retirement System. This roster would be used to develop an exact cost for the individual fire district electing to provide these benefits.

Summary of relevant resources:

Membership data as of March 31, 2022 was used in measuring the impact of the proposed change, the same data used in the April 1, 2022 actuarial valuation. Distributions and other statistics can be found in the 2022 Report of the Actuary and the 2022 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report.

The actuarial assumptions and methods used are described in the 2020, 2021, and 2022 Annual Report to the Comptroller on Actuarial Assumptions, and the Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York: Audit and Control.

The Market Assets and GASB Disclosures are found in the March 31, 2022 New York State and Local Retirement System Financial Statements and Supplementary Information.

I am a member of the American Academy of Actuaries and meet the Qualification Standards to render the actuarial opinion contained herein.

This fiscal note does not constitute a legal opinion on the viability of the proposed change nor is it intended to serve as a substitute for the professional judgment of an attorney.

This estimate, dated May 18, 2023, and intended for use only during the 2023 Legislative Session, is Fiscal Note No. 2023-168, prepared by the Actuary for the New York State and Local Retirement System.