

STATE OF NEW YORK

7716

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

May 1, 2025

Introduced by Sens. RAMOS, CLEARE, COONEY, HOYLMAN-SIGAL -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Civil Service and Pensions

AN ACT to amend the retirement and social security law, in relation to enacting the "building recruitment and incentives for dedicated government employees (BRIDGE) act"

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

1 Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as
2 the "building recruitment and incentives for dedicated government
3 employees (BRIDGE) act".

4 § 2. Legislative findings. The legislature finds that in light of
5 recent federal workforce reductions, particularly those orchestrated by
6 the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), New York state has an
7 unprecedented opportunity to attract highly skilled professionals with
8 substantial public service experience. The abrupt termination of thou-
9 sands of federal employees, including seasoned scientists, engineers,
10 and public administrators, has not only disrupted federal operations but
11 also released a wealth of talent into the job market.

12 To capitalize on this opportunity and strengthen our state workforce,
13 this legislation proposes allowing current and future New York state
14 employees who have prior federal service to purchase service credit
15 toward their New York state pension for the time they spent in federal
16 employment. By offering a pathway to integrate their prior service into
17 the state pension system, the legislature aims to create a more attrac-
18 tive employment environment that honors the contributions of these
19 public servants and secures their future within our state workforce.

20 § 3. The retirement and social security law is amended by adding a new
21 article 20-A to read as follows:

22 ARTICLE 20-A
23 FEDERAL SERVICE CREDIT

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

LBD10790-08-5

1 Section 1010. Federal service credit.

2 § 1010. Federal service credit. Notwithstanding any law to the contra-
3 ry, a member of the New York state and local employees' retirement
4 system, may be eligible for credit for prior employment by the federal
5 government as hereinafter provided:

6 a. A member, upon application to such retirement system, may obtain a
7 total not to exceed five years of service credit for up to five years of
8 employment by the federal government, if the member was enrolled in a
9 federal defined benefit pension plan. To obtain such credit, a member
10 shall pay such retirement system, for deposit in the fund used to accu-
11 minate employer contributions, a sum equal to the product of the number
12 of years of federal service being claimed and three percent of such
13 member's compensation earned during the twelve months of credited
14 service immediately preceding the date that the member made application
15 for credit pursuant to this section. If permitted by rule or regulation
16 of the applicable retirement system, the member may pay such member
17 costs by payroll deduction for a period which shall not exceed the time
18 period of federal service to be credited pursuant to this section. In
19 the event the member leaves the employer payroll prior to completion of
20 payment, such member shall forward all remaining required payments to
21 the appropriate retirement system prior to the effective date of retire-
22 ment. If the full amount of such member costs is not paid to the appro-
23 priate retirement system prior to the member's retirement, the amount of
24 service credited shall be proportional to the total amount of the
25 payments made prior to retirement.

26 b. A member must have at least five years of credited service (not
27 including service granted hereunder) to be eligible to receive credit
28 under this section.

29 c. In no event shall the credit granted pursuant to this section, when
30 added to credit granted for federal service with any retirement system
31 of this state pursuant to this or any other provision of law, exceed a
32 total of five years, provided however that this shall be considered
33 separately from, and not count against, credit granted for military
34 service in accordance with section one thousand of this chapter.

35 d. To be eligible to receive credit for federal service under this
36 section, a member shall make application for such credit before the
37 effective date of retirement.

38 e. All costs for service credited to a member pursuant to this
39 section, other than the member costs set forth in subdivision a of this
40 section, shall be paid by the state and all employers which participate
41 in the retirement system in which such member is granted credit.

42 f. 1. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, in the event of
43 death prior to retirement, amounts paid by the member for the purchase
44 of federal service credit pursuant to this section shall be refunded,
45 with interest, to the extent the federal service purchased with such
46 amounts does not produce a greater death benefit than would have been
47 payable had the member not purchased such credit.

48 2. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, in the event of retire-
49 ment, amounts paid by the member for the purchase of federal service
50 credit pursuant to this section shall be refunded, with interest, to the
51 extent the federal service purchased with such amounts does not produce
52 a greater retirement allowance than would have been payable had the
53 member not purchased such credit.

54 g. Anything to the contrary in subdivision a of this section notwith-
55 standing, to obtain such credit, a member who first joins a public
56 retirement system of the state on or after April first, two thousand

twelve shall pay such retirement system, for deposit in the fund used to accumulate employer contributions, a sum equal to the product of the number of years of federal service being claimed and six percent of such member's compensation earned during the twelve months of credited service immediately preceding the date that the member made application for credit pursuant to this section.

§ 4. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, none of the provisions of this act shall be subject to section 25 of the retirement and social security law.

§ 5. This act shall take effect immediately.

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

This bill would allow members of the New York State and Local Retirement System (NYSLRS) Employees' Retirement System (ERS) to obtain up to five years of service credit for employment by the federal government, if the member was enrolled in a federal defined benefit plan. Federal service is interpreted to be distinct from military service. The purchased service is creditable in age-based plans, like Article 15, but not service-based plans where specific criteria limits crediting, like Article 14-B.

This bill is not consistent with NYSLRS policy defining credited service as paid employment with a participating employer in NYSLRS.

This bill is not consistent with NYSLRS policy prohibiting service credit for any employment that entitles the member to a benefit from the federal government, or any other public or private retirement system in New York State or any other state.

To be eligible, members must apply before retirement but not before attaining 5 years of service credit. Members would be required to pay three percent of their most recent compensation (six percent for Tier 6 members) for each year of additional service credit granted by this bill. Member contributions are refunded to the member, with interest, if the purchased service does not result in an improved death or retirement benefit.

The provisions of Section 25 of the Retirement and Social Security Law shall not apply.

If this bill is enacted during the 2025 Legislative Session, it is estimated that the past service cost will average 21% of an affected member's compensation for each year of additional service that is credited. This cost will be reduced by member contributions. All remaining costs will be shared by the State of New York and the local participating employers in ERS.

Further, we anticipate significant 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. Because a member can apply for this service credit at any time prior to retirement, a precise cost cannot be determined until each current or future member applies for the service credit.

Summary of relevant resources:

Membership data as of March 31, 2024 was used in measuring the impact of the proposed change, the same data used in the April 1, 2024 actuarial valuation. Distributions and other statistics can be found in the 2024 Report of the Actuary and the 2024 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. The actuarial assumptions and methods used are described in the 2024 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, 2024 New York State and Local Retirement System Financial Statements and Supplementary Information.

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 April 30, 2025, and intended for use only during the 2025 Legislative Session, is Fiscal Note No. 2025-135. As Chief Actuary of the New York State and Local Retirement System, I, Aaron Schottin Young, hereby certify that this analysis complies with applicable Actuarial Standards of Practice as well as the Code of Professional Conduct and Qualification Standards for Actuaries Issuing Statements of Actuarial Opinion of the American Academy of Actuaries, of which I am a member.