

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1453

As Reported By House Committee On:
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to reserve officers' retirement.

Brief Description: Providing for reserve officers' retirement.

Sponsors: Representatives Foreman, Ogden, Chappell, Costa, Dickerson, Schoesler, Stevens and Radcliff.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 2/28/95, 3/1/95 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 27 members: Representatives Silver, Chairman; Clements, Vice Chairman; Huff, Vice Chairman; Pelesky, Vice Chairman; Sommers, Ranking Minority Member; Valle, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Beeksma; Brumsickle; Chappell; Cooke; Crouse; G. Fisher; Foreman; Hargrove; Hickel; Jacobsen; Lambert; Lisk; McMorris; Poulsen; Reams; Rust; Sehlin; Sheahan; Talcott; Thibaudeau and Wolfe.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Carlson.

Staff: Dan Chang (786-7191).

Background: Local governments have the option of joining the Volunteer Fire Fighters' Relief and Pension Fund. The fund provides two kinds of benefits to volunteer fire fighters: 1) relief benefits providing medical and survivor needs, and 2) a pension system providing for retirement.

The base retirement benefit is calculated upon retirement for each member equalling \$25 per month plus \$8 for each year contributions were made not to exceed \$225 per month. A percentage factor based on years of service is then applied to the base in order to arrive at the monthly benefit.

The fund is administered by the State Board of Volunteer Fire Fighters who sets annual contribution rates. Cost per member of the pension fund is \$109. Members contribute \$30 per year, the municipality contributes an additional \$30 per year, and the remaining cost is paid from the fire insurance premium tax.

Currently, no such provisions exist for reserve law officers. There are 2,349 (23 percent) reserve law officers working in 172 cities in 38 counties of the state of Washington compared to 7,876 (77 percent) regular officers.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Local governments and their reserve officers are allowed to join the pension benefits portion of the Volunteer Fire Fighters' Relief and Pension Fund. The Board of Volunteer Fire Fighters will set fees for participation that result in no change in current contribution rates and no change in the current funding system.

Prior service credit can be purchased, however, reserve officers are excluded from the relief system and retirement benefit will not be granted unless the reserve officer completes at least three years of service after the effective date of this act.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill requires the member to serve five years after the effective date of the act in order to receive a benefit. The substitute bill reduces that requirement to three years. The substitute bill permits reserve officers to receive credit for work as a volunteer fire fighter or emergency service medical worker but it does not permit credit for service under other retirement systems. The substitute bill also makes technical corrections.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Reserve officers work under the same conditions, facing the same danger as regular officers but work as volunteers. Reserve officers also do not receive retirement benefits for the work they do. HB 1453 would provide reserve officers with a pension benefit and may provide an extra incentive to continue their work to protect communities.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Charles Muncee, Wenatchee Police Reserve Unit; Larry Slavens, Sunnyside Police Department; Terry Lattin, Seattle Police Department; Doug Bider, Spokane County Sheriff's Office; Larry Erickson, WASPC; Stephen Zetz, Sunnyside

Police Department; Denny Henderson, Sunnyside Police Department; M. Zimmerman, Chelan County Sheriff; Bob King, Chelan County Sheriff; and Caroline Libbey; Chelan County Sheriff.