

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1198

As Passed House:

February 12, 2003

Title: An act relating to determining which fire fighters or law enforcement officers may elect or be elected to certain pension and disability boards.

Brief Description: Determining which fire fighters or law enforcement officers may elect or be elected to certain pension and disability boards.

Sponsors: By Representatives Pflug and Conway; by request of Joint Committee on Pension Policy.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 1/28/03, 2/5/03 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/12/03, 97-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Restricts eligibility to vote in Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Plan 1 disability board elections to members subject to the jurisdiction of the board.
- Allows members of the Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Plan 2 to be elected to the disability boards, but not cast votes in board elections.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 27 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Sehlin, Ranking Minority Member; Pearson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Boldt, Buck, Clements, Cody, Conway, Cox, DeBolt, Dunshee, Grant, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, McDonald, McIntire, Miloscia, Pflug, Ruderman, Schual-Berke, Sump and Talcott.

Staff: David Pringle (786-7310).

Background:

The Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Retirement System Plan 1 (LEOFF 1) provides retirement and disability benefits to law enforcement officers and fire fighters who entered eligible employment between 1969 and 1977. Since 1977 eligible law enforcement officers and fire fighters have entered LEOFF 2.

Decisions on eligibility for LEOFF 1 disability and medical benefits is made by city and county LEOFF 1 disability boards. Disability benefits may be granted by LEOFF 1 disability boards to members in LEOFF 1 for both duty and non duty-related causes. In addition to disability benefits, LEOFF 1 is unique among state retirement system benefits in that retiree benefits include coverage for all necessary medical services.

Each city with a population of 20,000 or more has a LEOFF 1 disability board. Each county also has a disability board, and these county boards have jurisdiction over LEOFF 1 members who are not employed in a city that has its own disability board. Under current law, one of the members of a county board must be a member of the legislative body of a city or town in the county that does not have its own board. This member must be chosen by a majority of the mayors of the affected cities or towns.

Elections are held for fire fighter and law enforcement officer-designated LEOFF 1 disability board positions. All members of LEOFF Plan 1 and 2 are entitled to vote for board members. The decision-making authority of the board does not apply to LEOFF 2. Disability board members are not required to be LEOFF 1 members.

Summary of Bill:

Only law enforcement officers and fire fighters subject to the jurisdiction of the LEOFF 1 disability boards may vote in board member elections. All law enforcement officers or fire fighters employed or retired from the city and county may serve as LEOFF 1 disability board members, regardless of retirement plan membership.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: It makes sense that only the members under the LEOFF 1 disability board's authority vote in board elections. This is a simple bill with no cost that would make changes that we support to the LEOFF 1 board election process.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Dick Warbrouck, Retired Fire Fighters of Washington.