

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5313

As Reported by House Committee On:
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to establishing the retirement age for members of the Washington state patrol retirement system.

Brief Description: Establishing the retirement age for members of the Washington state patrol retirement system.

Sponsors: Senators Haugen, Schoesler, Kilmer, Hatfield, Shin and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 3/28/07, 3/29/07 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Increases the mandatory retirement age for members of the Washington State Patrol Retirement System from age 60 to age 65.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 32 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Dunshee, Vice Chair; Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Haler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Buri, Chandler, Cody, Conway, Darneille, Dunn, Ericks, Fromhold, Grant, Haigh, Hinkle, Hunt, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Kretz, Linville, McDermott, McDonald, Morrell, Pettigrew, Priest, Schual-Berke, Seaquist and Walsh.

Staff: David Pringle (786-7310).

Background:

The Washington State Patrol Retirement System (WSPRS) provides retirement benefits to the 1,022 active and 792 retired commissioned officers of the Washington State Patrol. There are two tiers of benefits within the WSPRS, one for officers commissioned before January 1, 2003, and another for those commissioned on or after January 1, 2003.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

There are a variety of differences between the two tiers of benefits in WSPRS, including the period over which average salary is calculated and credit for prior military service credit; however, members of both benefit tiers are eligible to retire at either age 55 or with 25 years of service credit. Any member except the Chief of the Washington State Patrol must retire on the first day of the calendar month following the month that he or she reaches 60 years of age.

For members of WSPRS tier 1, also referred to as Plan 1, a member who earns 25 years of service credit is eligible for up to five years of military service credit for periods served prior to the member's WSPRS service. At retirement, a Plan 1 member eligible for this prior military service credit adds these years to the years of WSPRS service that are then multiplied by 2 percent of a member's average final salary to calculate the member's benefit. Members of WSPRS tier 2 or Plan 2 are not eligible for this prior, or non-interruptive military service credit benefit.

Summary of Bill:

The mandatory retirement age for members of the Washington State Patrol Retirement System is increased from age 60 to age 65.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The bill is very simple. People are living longer and healthier, and some would like to work longer. Please allow them to do so. This is a retention and recruitment issue for us. We lost six troopers to forced retirement last year, and five went on to other law enforcement employment. People are being forced to retire, not to quit working, but to continue working elsewhere. We are the only law enforcement agency in the state with this mandatory retirement requirement, and would like equity. It costs about \$100,000 to train a new trooper. We lost six people last year and another six on the board this year, none of whom had any health or performance issues but instead were required to retire unnecessarily. We can get five more years for some employees, rather than having to train new employees, allowing us to save money and serve the public better.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Jeff DeVere, Washington State Patrol; Tommie Pillow, Washington State Patrol Troopers Association; and Rick Jensen, Washington State Troopers Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.