

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1558

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Ways & Means, February 26, 2018

Title: An act relating to membership in the Washington public safety employees' retirement system for employees who provide nursing care to, or ensure the custody and safety of, offender, probationary, and patient populations in institutions and centers.

Brief Description: Authorizing membership in the Washington public safety employees' retirement system for employees who provide nursing care to, or ensure the custody and safety of, offender, probationary, and patient populations in institutions and centers.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Kilduff, MacEwen, Sawyer, Hayes, Harris, Griffey, Ormsby, Riccelli, Bergquist, Dolan, Doglio, Lovick, Ryu, Goodman, Peterson, Fitzgibbon, Muri, Stanford and Fey).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/12/18, 89-9.

Committee Activity: Ways & Means: 2/24/18, 2/26/18 [DP, DNP, w/oRec].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides membership in the Public Safety Employees' Retirement System (PSERS) for employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs (Veterans Affairs) and the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) whose primary responsibility is to provide nursing care to, or to ensure the custody or safety of, offender and patient populations in state institutions including the mental health hospitals and the Child Study and Treatment Center.
- Provides membership in PSERS to state, city, and county corrections personnel who are employed by a PSERS employer and whose primary responsibility is to provide nursing care to, or ensure the custody and safety of, offender and patient populations.
- Adds Veterans Affairs and DSHS as eligible PSERS employers.
- Permits members of the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) Plan 2 or Plan 3 made newly eligible for PSERS to choose between remaining in PERS or transferring to PSERS for periods of future service.

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.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Rolfes, Chair; Frockt, Vice Chair; Billig, Carlyle, Conway, Darneille, Fain, Hasegawa, Hunt, Keiser, Mullet, Palumbo, Pedersen, Ranker, Van De Wege and Warnick.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Honeyford, Assistant Ranking Member; Bailey, Becker and Wagoner.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Braun, Ranking Member; Brown and Schoesler.

Staff: Amanda Cecil (786-7460)

Background: The Public Safety Employees' Retirement System (PSERS) was created in 2004 and opened to members on July 1, 2006. PSERS provides retirement benefits for state and local government employees who work in positions with law enforcement duties but are not eligible for membership in the Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Retirement System. Members of PSERS with at least 20 years of service will be eligible for full retirement benefits from age 60, five years earlier than the regular retirement age in Public Employees' Retirement System Plans 2 and 3. Members of PSERS with 20 years of service may also opt for early retirement beginning at age 53 with a 3 percent reduction in benefits per year of early retirement.

Membership in PSERS is restricted by an individual's employer and by specific job criteria. PSERS employers are defined as the Department of Corrections, the Department of Natural Resources, the State Parks and Recreation Commission, the Gambling Commission, the Washington State Patrol, the Liquor and Cannabis Board, county corrections departments, and the corrections departments of municipalities not classified as first class cities.

Summary of Bill: Employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Social and Health Services that provide nursing care to, or ensure the custody or safety of, offender and patient populations in state institutions including mental health hospitals, the Child Study and Treatment Center, and residential sites serving developmentally disabled patients or offenders, but not including the State Operating Living Alternatives facilities, are eligible for membership in PSERS.

In addition to corrections officers, membership in PSERS is provided to other state, city, and county corrections personnel whose primary responsibility is to provide direct care to, or nurse the custody and safety of, offender and patient populations.

Members of the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) Plan 2 or Plan 3 made newly eligible for PSERS, choose between remaining in PERS or transferring to PSERS for periods of future service. The choice to transfer to PSERS must be made during an election period between January 1, 2019, and March 1, 2019. Membership in PSERS for transferring PERS members is prospective, and past service credit remains in PERS, making members' eventual retirement calculated under the dual membership rules.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: There will be cost savings to this bill that are not captured in the fiscal note. These employees experience high numbers of injuries and have very high Department of Labor & Industries worker compensation rates. People should not be working in dangerous positions until they are 65 years old. This bill will do a lot to recruit and retain for these high risk positions.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Matt Zuvich, Washington Federation of State Employees; Lindsey Grad, SEIU Healthcare 1199NW.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.