

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2051

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Ways & Means, March 18, 2019

Title: An act relating to firefighters and law enforcement officers pension and disability boards.

Brief Description: Concerning firefighters and law enforcement officers pension and disability boards.

Sponsors: Representatives Lovick, Chapman, Griffey and Dent.

Brief History: Passed House: 3/09/19, 96-0.

Committee Activity: Ways & Means: 3/18/19 [DPA (WM)].

Brief Summary of Amended Bill

- Expands eligibility of who can serve on firefighter and law enforcement officer pension and disability boards to include active or retired firefighters or law enforcement officers residing in the district yet not subject to the jurisdiction of the board, when no eligible firefighter and law enforcement officer is willing or able to be elected.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Rolfes, Chair; Frockt, Vice Chair, Operating, Capital Lead; Mullet, Capital Budget Cabinet; Brown, Assistant Ranking Member, Operating; Honeyford, Assistant Ranking Member, Capital; Bailey, Becker, Billig, Carlyle, Conway, Darneille, Hasegawa, Hunt, Keiser, Liias, Palumbo, Pedersen, Schoesler, Van De Wege, Wagoner, Warnick and Wilson, L..

Staff: Amanda Cecil (786-7460)

Background: Pre-Law Enforcement Officers' and Firefighters' Retirement System Plan 1 Pension Boards. Before the implementation of the Law Enforcement Officers' and Firefighters' Retirement System Plan 1 (LEOFF 1) in 1970, law enforcement and firefighter pensions were administered by local pension boards. Firefighter pension boards are made of five members, including three ex officio city or county officials and two active or retired

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firefighters of that pension system. Law enforcement officer pension boards are made up of seven members, including four ex officio city or county officials and three active or retired member of the police department of that pension system. Member representatives are elected to the boards by a majority of the voting active and retired members of that pension system.

Law Enforcement Officers' and Firefighters' Retirement System Plan 1 Disability Boards. LEOFF 1 provides retirement and disability benefits to law enforcement officers and firefighters who entered eligible employment between 1969 and 1977. Under LEOFF 1, the employer is responsible for paying all necessary medical services for members and retirees. Pension benefits are administered statewide by the Department of Retirement Systems (DRS). Disability benefits are administered by city and county LEOFF 1 disability boards, which make decisions on eligibility for disability and medical benefits. Disability benefits may be granted by LEOFF 1 disability boards 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.

Cities with a population of 20,000 or more have a LEOFF 1 disability board with jurisdiction over members who are employed by that city. Each county also has a disability board with jurisdiction over members who are not city board. Both city and county LEOFF 1 disability boards are made up of five members, including two city or county officials, one member of the public, and one active or retired firefighter and one active or retired law enforcement officer that are subject to the jurisdiction of that board.

In 1977, new membership to LEOFF 1 was closed. Since that time newly eligible firefighters and law enforcement officers are enrolled in LEOFF 2. LEOFF 2 benefits are administered by the LEOFF 2 Board and by DRS. There are no locally administered boards or benefits under LEOFF 2.

Summary of Amended Bill: The eligibility of who can serve on a firefighters or law enforcement officers pension or disability board is expanded to include active or retired firefighters or law enforcement officers not under the jurisdiction of that board residing in the district. Eligibility is only expanded when no eligible firefighter and law enforcement officer is willing or able to be elected. This would include members of LEOFF 2 and firefighters working for a regional fire protection service authority.

EFFECT OF WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE AMENDMENT(S):

- Clarifies that board membership is expanded to active or retired members of one of Washington's pension systems.

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 on House Bill: No public hearing was held.

Persons Testifying: N/A

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: N/A