Washington State
House of Representatives
Office of Program Research

BILL
ANALYSIS

Appropriations Committee

SB 5296

Brief Description: Modifying the definition of index for the Washington state patrol retirement system.

Sponsors: Senators Schoesler, Conway, Dozier, Muzzall, Rivers, Van De Wege and Warnick; by request of Select Committee on Pension Policy.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Changes a reference to the Consumer Price Index used to adjust the benefits for retirees of the Washington State Patrol Retirement System from the obsolete Seattle-Tacoma-Bremerton Washington area to the Seattle, Washington area.

Hearing Date: 3/11/21

Staff: David Pringle (786-7310).

Background:

The Washington State Patrol Retirement System (WSPRS) covers commissioned officers of the Washington State Patrol. Since 2003, WSPRS retiree benefits have been adjusted annually based specifically on the consumer price index (CPI) for the Seattle-Tacoma-Bremerton, Washington area for urban wage earners and clerical workers, up to 3 percent each year.

In 2018, the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, which is responsible for producing the CPIs nationally, modified the geographic sample of the Seattle, Washington area CPI to no longer include Island, Kitsap, and Thurston counties. It was renamed the Seattle-Tacoma-

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Bellevue CPI.

Even though retirees from other pension systems have their benefits adjusted based on the same index, other statutes related to the adjustments include a general reference to the Seattle, Washington area CPI rather than identifying it by the specific name.

Summary of Bill:

The reference to Tacoma-Bremerton is removed from the statute that defines the index used to adjust the benefits for retirees of the WSPRS.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.