

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1997

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SENATE BILL 235*

Short Title: Increase Fire/Rescue Benefits.

(Public)

Sponsors: Senator Martin of Pitt.

Referred to: Pensions & Retirement and Insurance.

February 25, 1997

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO INCREASE THE MONTHLY BENEFITS FROM THE NORTH CAROLINA FIREMEN'S AND RESCUE SQUAD WORKERS' PENSION FUND.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. G.S. 58-86-55 reads as rewritten:

"§ 58-86-55. Monthly pensions upon retirement.

Any member who has served 20 years as an 'eligible fireman' or 'eligible rescue squad worker' in the State of North Carolina, as provided in G.S. 58-86-25 and G.S. 58-86-30, and who has attained the age of 55 years is entitled to be paid a monthly pension from this fund. The monthly pension shall be in the amount of ~~one hundred thirty-five dollars (\$135.00)~~ one hundred fifty-five dollars (\$155.00) per month. Any retired fireman receiving a pension of ~~one hundred ten dollars (\$110.00)~~ per month shall, effective July 1, ~~1995, 1997,~~ receive a pension of ~~one hundred thirty-five dollars (\$135.00)~~ one hundred fifty-five dollars (\$155.00) per month.

Members shall pay ten dollars (\$10.00) per month as required by G.S. 58-86-35 and G.S. 58-86-40 for a period of no longer than 20 years. No 'eligible rescue squad member' shall receive a pension prior to July 1, 1983. No member shall be entitled to a pension hereunder until the member's official duties as a fireman or rescue squad worker for which the member is paid compensation shall have been terminated and the member shall have retired as such according to standards or rules fixed by the board of trustees.

A member who is totally and permanently disabled while in the discharge of the member's official duties as a result of bodily injuries sustained or as a result of extreme exercise or extreme activity experienced in the course and scope of those official duties

1 and who leaves the fire or rescue squad service because of this disability shall be
2 entitled to be paid from the fund a monthly benefit in an amount of ~~one hundred thirty-~~
3 ~~five dollars (\$135.00)~~ one hundred fifty-five dollars (\$155.00) per month beginning the
4 first month after the member's fifty fifth birthday. All applications for disability are
5 subject to the approval of the board who may appoint physicians to examine and
6 evaluate the disabled member prior to approval of the application, and annually
7 thereafter. Any disabled member shall not be required to make the monthly payment of
8 ten dollars (\$10.00) as required by G.S. 58-86-35 and G.S. 58-86-40.

9 A member who is totally and permanently disabled for any cause, other than line of
10 duty, who leaves the fire or rescue squad service because of this disability and who has
11 at least 10 years of service with the pension fund, may be permitted to continue making
12 a monthly contribution of ten dollars (\$10.00) to the fund until the member has made
13 contributions for a total of 240 months. The member shall upon attaining the age of 55
14 years be entitled to receive a pension as provided by this section. All applications for
15 disability are subject to the approval of the board who may appoint physicians to
16 examine and evaluate the disabled member prior to approval of the application and
17 annually thereafter.

18 A member who, because his residence is annexed by a city under Part 2 or Part 3 of
19 Article 4 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes, or whose department is closed
20 because of an annexation by a city under Part 2 or Part 3 of Article 4 of Chapter 160A
21 of the General Statutes, and because of such annexation is unable to perform as a
22 fireman of any status, and if the member has at least 10 years of service with the
23 pension fund, may be permitted to continue making a monthly contribution of ten
24 dollars (\$10.00) to the fund until the member has made contributions for a total of 240
25 months. The member upon attaining the age of 55 years and completion of such
26 contributions shall be entitled to receive a pension as provided by this section. Any
27 application to make monthly contributions under this section shall be subject to a
28 finding of eligibility by the Board of Trustees upon application of the member.

29 The pensions provided shall be in addition to all other pensions or benefits under any
30 other statutes of the State of North Carolina or the United States, notwithstanding any
31 exclusionary provisions of other pensions or retirement systems provided by law."

32 Section 2. It is the intent of the General Assembly to provide cost-of-living
33 increases to members and retirees of the Firemen's and Rescue Squad Workers' Pension
34 Fund at a rate equal to any cost-of-living increases provided to beneficiaries of the
35 Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System, to the extent that funds are
36 available.

37 Section 3. This act becomes effective July 1, 1997.