

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2017

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HOUSE BILL 651
Committee Substitute Favorable 6/29/17
Senate Pensions and Retirement and Aging Committee Substitute Adopted 6/13/18

Short Title: State Pension/Ret. Health Ben. Fund Solvency. (Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

April 11, 2017

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE UNFUNDED LIABILITY SOLVENCY RESERVE.
3 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

4 **SECTION 1.** Article 4 of Chapter 143C of the General Statutes is amended by adding
5 a new section to read:

6 **"§ 143C-4-9. Unfunded Liability Solvency Reserve.**

7 (a) Creation. – The Unfunded Liability Solvency Reserve is established as a reserve in
8 the General Fund. The Unfunded Liability Solvency Reserve is an employee benefits trust as
9 described under G.S. 143C-1-3(a).

10 (b) Definitions. – The following definitions apply in this section:

11 (1) Benefit enhancement. – Any change to the benefits provided under the
12 Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System of North Carolina
13 established under G.S. 135-2 or to the Retiree Health Benefit Fund established
14 under G.S. 135-7(f) that is estimated to increase the contributions or liabilities
15 associated with either program, as indicated by an actuarial note provided
16 under G.S. 120-114.

17 (2) Health Benefit Fund. – The Retiree Health Benefit Fund established under
18 G.S. 135-7(f).

19 (3) Health Benefit Fund Actuarial Committee. – The Committee on Actuarial
20 Valuation of Retired Employees' Health Benefits established under
21 G.S. 135-48.12.

22 (4) Reserve. – The Unfunded Liability Solvency Reserve established under
23 subsection (a) of this section.

24 (5) Retirement System. – The Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System
25 of North Carolina established under G.S. 135-2.

26 (c) Source of Funds. – The Reserve shall receive the following funds:

27 (1) Any amounts that shall be appropriated by the General Assembly.

28 (2) Funds transferred under G.S. 142-15.4, 142-96, and 143C-4-2.

29 (d) Transfer of Funds From the Reserve. – The transfer of funds from the Reserve shall
30 meet all of the following requirements:

31 (1) The funds in the Reserve shall be used only for transfers to the (i) Health
32 Benefit Fund or (ii) the Retirement System for the purpose of reducing the
33 unfunded liabilities of those two funds.

34 (2) Funds in the Reserve must be appropriated by the end of the next fiscal year
35 after the funds entered the Reserve.



1 (3) Transfers from the Reserve to the Health Benefit Fund and the Retirement
2 System shall not supplant employer contributions otherwise designated for the
3 Health Benefit Fund or Retirement System. Transfers shall be made from the
4 Reserve only upon the following conditions:

5 a. The portion of the State's employer contribution rate provided to the
6 Health Benefit Fund is not less than the cost of the premiums for the
7 retirees served by the Retiree Health Benefit Fund in the most recent
8 plan year.

9 b. The portion of the State's employer contribution rate provided to the
10 Retirement System in effect at the time of the transfer is equal to or
11 greater than the rate certified under G.S. 135-8 as necessary by the
12 Board of Trustees of the Retirement System.

13 c. Transfers from the Reserves shall not be used to pay the cost of benefit
14 enhancements commencing after July 1, 2017.

15 (e) Use of Funds in the Reserve. – On the first day of each fiscal year, the total balance
16 of the Reserve as of the last day of the preceding fiscal year shall be used to appropriate an
17 additional employer contribution to the Health Benefit Trust and the Retirement System. This
18 additional employer contribution shall be calculated as follows:

19 (1) The total balance in the Reserve as of the last day of the preceding fiscal year
20 shall be divided between the Health Benefit Fund and the Retirement System
21 according to each program's proportion of the State's total unfunded liability
22 of both programs as reported in the most recent Comprehensive Annual
23 Financial Report issued by the State Controller.

24 (2) Each program's pro rata share of the total balance in the Reserve as of the last
25 day of the preceding fiscal year shall be converted into a percentage of the
26 General Fund payroll of covered members of the Health Benefit Fund and the
27 Retirement System.

28 (3) Each program's percentage of General Fund payroll of covered members, as
29 calculated in subdivision (2) of this subsection, shall be set as an additional
30 portion of the State's employer contribution rate budgeted for retirement and
31 related benefits. The following shall also apply:

32 a. The percentage of General Fund payroll of covered members allocated
33 to the Health Benefit Fund shall be added to the portion of the State's
34 employer contribution rate budgeted for hospital and medical benefits.

35 b. The percentage of General Fund payroll of covered members allocated
36 to the Retirement System shall be added to the State's employer
37 contribution rate budgeted for the Retirement System.

38 (f) Not Considered Debt Service Funds. – Any funds in the Reserve, as well as any funds
39 from the Reserve used to establish additional contributions to the Health Benefit Fund or
40 Retirement System, shall not be considered debt service funds for general long-term debt
41 principal and interest."

42 **SECTION 2.(a)** G.S. 142-15.4, as amended by S.L. 2017-5, is amended by adding
43 a new subsection to read:

44 "(d) If, and to the extent that, the balance of the Savings Reserve is at or above the
45 recommended Savings Reserve balance developed pursuant to G.S. 143C-4-2(f), whenever
46 general obligation bonds issued or incurred by the State are refinanced, the following shall apply:

47 (1) The General Assembly shall not reduce the funds appropriated for serving the
48 refinanced debt during the fiscal biennium in which the refinancing occurs.

49 (2) The State Controller shall, in conjunction with the State Treasurer,
50 periodically transfer the savings resulting from the refinancing of the debt to

1 the Unfunded Liability Solvency Reserve, established under G.S. 143C-4-9,
2 during the fiscal biennium in which the refinancing occurs.

- 3 (3) In the fiscal biennium immediately following the refinancing, the Director of
4 the Budget shall adjust the amount of debt service funded in the base budget
5 so that it aligns with the actual debt service needs."

6 **SECTION 2.(b)** G.S. 142-96, as amended by S.L. 2017-5, is amended by adding a
7 new subsection to read:

8 "(d) If, and to the extent that, the balance of the Savings Reserve is at or above the
9 recommended Savings Reserve balance developed pursuant to G.S. 143C-4-2(f), whenever
10 special indebtedness issued or incurred by the State is refinanced, the following shall apply:

- 11 (1) The General Assembly shall not reduce the funds appropriated for serving the
12 refinanced debt during the fiscal biennium in which the refinancing occurs.
13 (2) The State Controller shall, in conjunction with the State Treasurer,
14 periodically transfer the savings resulting from the refinancing of the debt to
15 the Unfunded Liability Solvency Reserve, established under G.S. 143C-4-9,
16 during the fiscal biennium in which the refinancing occurs.
17 (3) In the fiscal biennium immediately following the refinancing, the Director of
18 the Budget shall adjust the amount of debt service funded in the base budget
19 so that it aligns with the actual debt service needs."

20 **SECTION 2.(c)** G.S. 143C-4-2, as amended by S.L. 2017-5, is amended by adding
21 two new subsections to read:

22 "(i) Unfunded Liability Solvency Reserve Full-Growth Transfer Requirement. – If, and
23 to the extent that, the balance of the Savings Reserve is at or above the recommended Savings
24 Reserve balance developed under subsection (f) of this section as of the last day of the fiscal year,
25 the Current Operations Appropriations Act for the succeeding fiscal year shall include a transfer
26 to the Unfunded Liability Solvency Reserve of fifteen percent (15%) of the succeeding fiscal
27 year's estimated growth in State tax revenues that are deposited in the General Fund.

28 (j) Unfunded Liability Solvency Reserve Partial Growth Transfer Requirement. – If, and
29 to the extent that, the balance of the Savings Reserve is below the recommended Savings Reserve
30 balance developed under subsection (f) of this section as of the last day of the fiscal year, prior
31 to the transfer of fifteen percent (15%) of the succeeding fiscal year's estimated growth in State
32 tax revenues that are deposited in the General Fund, then the following shall apply:

- 33 (1) If, upon transfer to the Savings Reserve funds in the amount of fifteen percent
34 (15%) of estimated growth in State tax revenues deposited in the General
35 Fund, the balance of the Savings Reserve is above the recommended Savings
36 Reserve balance developed under subsection (f) of this section, then the
37 Current Operations Appropriations Act shall include a transfer to the
38 Unfunded Liability Solvency Reserve of an amount equal to the difference
39 between the recommended balance of the Savings Reserve developed under
40 subsection (f) of this section and the balance of the Savings Reserve upon
41 transfer of fifteen percent (15%) of estimated growth in State tax revenues.
42 (2) If, upon transfer to the Savings Reserve funds in the amount of fifteen percent
43 (15%) of estimated growth in State tax revenues deposited in the General
44 Fund, the balance of Savings Reserves is at or below the recommended
45 Savings Reserve balance developed under subsection (f) of this section, then
46 no such transfer described in subdivision (1) of this subsection shall occur."

47 **SECTION 3.** This act becomes effective October 1, 2018.