

UPDATE ON RETIREMENT LEGISLATION

by Terry Mangum, Vice President and
Legislative Committee Chair

and

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Two new retirement bills have been introduced in the Short Session. By new, I mean bills in addition to the two bills that the FOP considers its bills, which are House Bill 1114 and Senate Bill 1444, that are currently pending.

The first bill is House Bill 2350, which was introduced by Representative Marian McLawhorn and co-sponsored by Representative Larry Bell (who is chair of the House Pensions and Retirement Committee), Representative Tim Spear, a former Wildlife Officer and Clerk of Court, and Representative Ray Warren, a former Sheriff. This a 25-year retirement with unreduced benefits after age 50 and 25 years of service and eligibility for the Special Separation Allowance after age 50 and 25 years of service (an additional provision) or age 55 and 5 years of service (the current law). This bill applies to both State and local law enforcement officers. Representative McLawhorn has been supportive of our bills in the past, and is in a tough race for her seat this Fall. It is my understanding that she has been receiving a lot of pressure and inquiry from officers in her home district and wanted to introduce this bill as a way to see if she can help move this process along.

The second bill is House Bill 2117, introduced by Representative Ronnie Sutton. We have seen this bill introduced in numerous legislative sessions before. This is a 28-year retirement bill with unreduced benefits, but nothing is said about the Special Separation Allowance. This bill applies **only** to State law enforcement officers.

Of the two bills, House Bill 2350 is very attractive in that it has some provisions from the negotiations with Senator John Snow regarding Senate Bill 1444 that are of interest to the FOP. In those negotiations, we learned that - - at least in the Senate - - it will be difficult to get a 25-year retirement bill passed, and keep the Special Separation Allowance, unless there is some type of age cap on when the officer can begin drawing this Special Separation Allowance. This bill is a movement in that direction.

Both of these new bills have been assigned to the House Pensions & Retirement and Aging Committee but neither has been heard.

Along with the PBA, we had hoped to see some movement on House Bill 1114, the FOP endorsed retirement bill that was introduced by Representative Rick Glazier in the House. However, and most unfortunately, Representative Glazier has had emergency disc surgery and is going to be out until at least mid-June. The Session is moving very fast and the rumors are that the legislature will adjourn before or very shortly after the 4th of July holiday.

If you have any questions regarding these bills, please contact Terry at Marman@verizon.net.