

NC LEGISLATIVE ALERT

A bill recently introduced in the Legislature could dramatically affect the future of law enforcement in North Carolina.

The Bill Sponsors - - and your local legislators - - need to hear from you now!

Senate Bill 1450, "State Retirement Age and Service Change," would make various changes in the retirement age for State employees, including State law enforcement officers.

While this bill affects "new hires," only, and the changes proposed in this legislation **do not apply to any existing employees**, this bill will destroy years of work to obtain benefits for law enforcement officers which reflect the duties and resulting stress of such employment.

Also, while the bill does not apply to local law enforcement officers, it could (and likely will!) be extended to local officers if it passes.

This bill would:

- Re-define State Law Enforcement Officer: For persons hired on or after January 1, 2011, the definition of a State law enforcement officer for retirement benefits would require the person to be a full-time paid employee of the State Bureau of Investigation (SBI), the State Highway Patrol (SHP) or the Alcohol Law Enforcement Division (ALE). For persons hired on or after January 1, 2011, law enforcement officer benefits would no longer be available to law enforcement officers employed by other State agencies, such as State Capital Police, Butner Public Safety, Fairgrounds Special Police, Wildlife officers, Marine Fisheries officers, university and community college police departments and many other State agencies.

For law enforcement officers employed by any State agency other than SBI, SHP, or ALE, those law enforcement officers hired on or after January 1, 2011, would not be eligible for a mandatory 5% contribution by their employer into their 401(k) account and would not be eligible upon retirement for the Special Separation Allowance benefit.

- Change the Service Retirement Allowance: Under current law, State law enforcement officers are eligible for a service retirement at age 50 with 15 or more years of creditable service or at age 55 with 5 or more years of creditable service. For persons hired on or after January 1, 2011, these requirements would be increased and a service retirement would only be available if the State law enforcement officer was at least 55 years of age with 25 years of creditable service or was at least 60 years of age with 5 years of creditable service. The officer could receive "reduced benefits" upon retirement at 55 years of age with at least 20 years of creditable service.
- Require Payment of State Employee Health Insurance: For all State employees hired on or after January 1, 2011, each State employee, whether law enforcement officers or not, will be required to pay \$10.00 per month for coverage under the State Health Plan.

- Abolish Longevity Pay: Provides that for any State employees hired on or after January 1, 2011, would not be eligible to participate in the longevity pay program

The ramifications of this bill are very serious. Without question, passage of the bill will affect the ability of the excluded State agencies to hire and retain quality, career officers.

It is also a dramatic move in the opposite direction, and away from the FOP's long-desired goal of obtaining retirement for all law enforcement officers after twenty-five (25) years with unreduced benefits.

You need to contact the Bill Sponsors today:

Senator Linda Garrou

N.C. Senate
300 N. Salisbury St., Rm. 627
Raleigh, NC 27603-5925
919. 733-5620
Linda.Garrou@ncleg.net

Senator A. B Swindell

N.C. Senate
300 N. Salisbury St., Rm. 629
Raleigh, NC 27603-5925
919.733-715-3030
AB.Swindell@ncleg.net

Senator David Hoyle

N.C. Senate
300 N. Salisbury St., Rm. 300-A
Raleigh, NC 27603-5925
919.733-5734
David.Hoyle@ncleg.net

And contact your local legislator by going to www.ncleg.net and clicking on Representation and then click on "Who Represents Me?" and enter your 9 digit zip code.

Tell them the bill unfairly excludes numerous State law enforcement officers who have just as much training and experience - - and provide as valuable service - - as their fellow officers in the SHP, SBI and ALE.

Tell them the bill will dramatically affect the ability of the excluded State agencies to hire and retain quality officers.

Tell them the bill is a move in the wrong direction!

Be polite! But tell them why its wrong!