

Study Resolution

Eligibility of public safety occupations for enhanced retirement benefits

Authorized by the Commission on November 7, 2022

WHEREAS, the state includes certain public safety employees in either the Virginia Law Officers Retirement System (VaLORS) or the State Police Officers Retirement System (SPORS), and some local governments include certain public safety employees in the local Law Enforcement Officers Retirement System (LEOS), to facilitate earlier retirement due to the risks and responsibilities of performing their job; and

WHEREAS, in 2008 JLARC conducted a Review of State Employee Total Compensation, which provided guidelines for job risks and responsibilities to consider when determining whether occupations should be eligible for enhanced retirement plan membership; and

WHEREAS, since the 2008 JLARC review, legislation frequently has been submitted requesting the inclusion of additional occupational groups in the VaLORS and LEOS retirement systems; and

WHEREAS, the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee and House Appropriations Committee sent a letter to the JLARC Director on August 23, 2022, requesting that JLARC evaluate specific occupations for which legislation has been recently submitted as well as existing occupations for their eligibility for enhanced retirement benefits provided under VaLORS or LEOS; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission that staff be directed to review the eligibility of public safety occupations for enhanced retirement benefits. In conducting its study staff shall (i) review the 2008 occupation risk and responsibility guidelines developed by JLARC for assessing eligibility for enhancement retirement plan membership to determine whether any modifications or updates to the guidelines are appropriate; (ii) assess existing state occupations covered through enhanced benefit plans against the guidelines; (iii) determine whether it would be appropriate to extend enhanced retirement benefits to additional state and local public safety occupations, particularly those requested for review by the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee and the House Appropriates Committee; and (iv) estimate the cost of extending enhanced retirement benefits to additional state and local public safety employees with the assistance of the Virginia Retirement System actuary.

JLARC shall make recommendations as necessary and review other issues as warranted.

All agencies of the Commonwealth, including the Virginia Retirement System, the Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission, the Department of Human Resource Management, the Virginia State Police, Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Corrections, the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Department of Conservation and Recreation, and Virginia local governments shall provide assistance, information, and data to JLARC for this study, upon request. JLARC staff shall have access to all information in the possession of agencies pursuant to § 30-59 and § 30-69 of the Code of Virginia. No provision of the Code of Virginia shall be interpreted as limiting or restricting the access of JLARC staff to information pursuant to its statutory authority.