

January 30, 2025

Dear Chairman Schauer and Members of the Government and Veterans Affairs Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today in support of House Bill 1419. My name is Sarah Miller, Public Safety Telecommunications Director and 911 Coordinator for Barnes County Dispatch and President of the North Dakota 911 Association. I have been serving this industry for 15 years in various roles such as Public Safety Telecommunicator, Public Safety Telecommunications Supervisor, Reserve Deputy, and Emergency Medical Technician. The testimony I am providing you with today is testimony on behalf of myself only and not the official positions of any organization I am affiliated with.

I am here today to express my support for House Bill 1419, which seeks to include Public Safety Telecommunicators in the Public Safety Retirement Plan. Public Safety Telecommunicators are the first link in the vital chain of emergency services provided to the public. They are the “first” first responders and the first point of contact in an emergency. Their expertise, quick thinking, and ability to make split-second decisions under pressure literally means the difference between someone living and someone dying.

This work requires the same level of dedication, training, and professionalism as that of firefighters, emergency medical services personnel, and law enforcement officers. Public Safety Telecommunicators are held to the same security clearances as our law enforcement partners and training programs are rigorous, often lasting four to six months in order to become proficient at a multitude of difficult skills and multitasking. Public Safety Telecommunicators are exposed to distressing and traumatic calls, yet must remain calm, focused, and professional in order to provide critical assistance to their caller and responding units. They make life saving decisions, provide critical instructions to callers (such as CPR and childbirth guidance), all while also providing coordination in these complex situations, keeping responding agencies updated with real-time information. This work ensures that responders arrive on-scene prepared, with necessary resources, and most importantly, safely.

While supporting this needed inclusion, I feel it is important to note the evolution of this profession and recognition of the term “dispatchers” needing to be replaced with Public Safety Telecommunicator, as defined in North Dakota Century Code 57-40.6-01, to better align with existing legislation and provide continuity in our profession. This updated title better encompasses the depth and alignment of the skills and job duties this role provides in the emergency response ecosystem.

Inclusion in the public safety retirement plan is another necessary step forward in recognizing the true reality of the work these men and women do 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. We recognize the responsibility, the expertise, and the immense pressure they shoulder each day as they leave their families, sign into their consoles, and take that first call each shift. These dedicated individuals are indispensable to public safety, and they deserve to be recognized as equals and receive the same benefits as their first responder partners. Additionally, this inclusion will further advance retention and recruitment of necessary professionals needed to serve their communities as Public Safety Telecommunicators.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and recognition of this important inclusion for Public Safety Telecommunicators. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Miller". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sarah Miller  
Public Safety Telecommunications Director/911 Coordinator  
Barnes County Dispatch  
701-845-8187

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1419**

Introduced by

Representatives Porter, Dockter, Heinert, O'Brien, M. Ruby, Satrom, Schauer

Senators Axtman, Cleary, Lee, Meyer, Roers

1 A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact sections 54-52-01, 54-52-02.1, 54-52-02.15,  
2 54-52-06.3, 54-52-06.4, and 54-52-17 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the public  
3 employees retirement system public safety retirement plan.

**4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

5 **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 54-52-01 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
6 amended and reenacted as follows:

**7 54-52-01. Definition of terms.**

8 As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires:

- 9 1. "Account balance" means the total contributions made by the employee, vested  
10 employer contributions under section 54-52-11.1, the vested portion of the vesting  
11 fund as of June 30, 1977, and interest credited thereon at the rate established by the  
12 board.
- 13 2. "Beneficiary" means any person in receipt of a benefit provided by this plan or any  
14 person designated by a participating member to receive benefits.
- 15 3. "Correctional officer" means a participating member who is employed as a correctional  
16 officer by a political subdivision and, notwithstanding subsection 16, for an individual  
17 employed on or after the effective date of this Act, is employed at least thirty-two hours  
18 per week and at least twenty weeks each year of employment. A correctional officer  
19 who is a participating member of the public safety retirement plan created by this  
20 chapter who begins employment on or after the effective date of this Act is ineligible to  
21 participate concurrently in any other retirement plan administered by the public  
22 employees retirement system.

- 1           4. "Deferred member" means a participating member who is not actively participating in  
2           the main plan under this chapter and who has an account intact in the main plan under  
3           this chapter.
- 4           5. "~~Dispatcher~~Public Safety Telecommunicator" means a participating member who is  
5           employed as a state radio  
6           dispatcher by the state or is employed as a public safety answering point ~~dispatcher-~~  
7           Public Safety Telecommunicator  
8           by a political subdivision, as defined under section 57-40.6-01 and, notwithstanding  
9           subsection 16, for an individual  
10           employed on or after the effective date of this Act, is employed at least thirty-two hours  
11           per week and at least twenty weeks each year of employment. A ~~dispatcher-public safety~~  
12           telecommunicator who is a  
13           participating member of the public safety retirement plan created by this chapter who  
14           begins employment on or after the effective date of this Act is ineligible to participate  
15           concurrently in any other retirement plan administered by the public employees  
16           retirement system.
- 17           6. "Eligible employee", except as otherwise provided under section 54-52-02.15, means  
18           a permanent employee who meets all of the eligibility requirements set by this chapter  
19           and who is eighteen years or more of age. The term includes appointive and elective  
20           officials under sections 54-52-02.5, 54-52-02.11, and 54-52-02.12, and nonteaching  
21           employees of the superintendent of public instruction, including the superintendent of  
22           public instruction, who elect to transfer from the teachers' fund for retirement to the  
23           public employees retirement system under section 54-52-02.13, and employees of the  
24           state board for career and technical education who elect to transfer from the teachers'  
25           fund for retirement to the public employees retirement system under section  
26           54-52-02.14. The term does not include nonclassified state employees who elected  
27           under section 54-52.6-02 to become members of the retirement plan established  
28           under chapter 54-52.6. The term does include employees of the judicial branch and  
29           employees of the board of higher education and state institutions under the jurisdiction  
30           of the board of higher education.
- 6-7. "Emergency medical services personnel" means a participating member employed by  
a political subdivision as an emergency medical services personnel, as defined under  
section 23-27-02 and, notwithstanding subsection 16, for an individual employed on or  
after the effective date of this Act, is employed at least thirty-two hours per week and

at least twenty weeks each year of employment. An emergency medical services

1 personnel who is a participating member of the public safety retirement plan created  
2 by this chapter who begins employment on or after the effective date of this Act is  
3 ineligible to participate concurrently in any other retirement plan administered by the  
4 public employees retirement system.

5 8. "Employee" means any individual employed by a governmental unit, whose  
6 compensation is paid out of the governmental unit's funds, or funds controlled or  
7 administered by a governmental unit, or paid by the federal government through any of  
8 its executive or administrative officials; licensed employees of a school district means  
9 those employees eligible to participate in the teachers' fund for retirement who, except  
10 under subsection 2 of section 54-52-17.2, are not eligible employees under this  
11 chapter.

12 ~~7.9.~~ "Employer" means a governmental unit.

13 ~~8-10.~~ "Firefighter" means a participating member who is employed as a firefighter by a  
14 political subdivision and, notwithstanding subsection 13, for an individual employed  
15 after July 31, 2017, is employed at least thirty-two hours per week and at least twenty  
16 weeks each year of employment. A firefighter who is a participating member of the ~~law~~  
17 ~~enforcement~~public safety retirement plan created by this chapter who begins  
18 employment after July 31, 2017, is ineligible to participate concurrently in any other  
19 retirement plan administered by the public employees retirement system. The term  
20 does not include a firefighter employee of the North Dakota national guard.

21 ~~9-11.~~ "Funding agent" or "agents" means an investment firm, trust bank, or other financial  
22 institution which the retirement board may select to hold and invest the employers' and  
23 members' contributions.

24 ~~10-12.~~ "Governmental unit" means the state of North Dakota, except the highway patrol for  
25 members of the retirement plan created under chapter 39-03.1, or a participating  
26 political subdivision of the state.

27 ~~11-13.~~ "National guard security officer or firefighter" means a participating member who is:  
28 a. A security police employee of the North Dakota national guard; or  
29 b. A firefighter employee of the North Dakota national guard.

30 ~~12-14.~~ "Participating member" means an eligible employee who through payment into the  
31 plan has established a claim against the plan.

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- 1 ~~13-15.~~ "Peace officer" means a participating member who is a peace officer as defined in  
2 section 12-63-01 and is employed as a peace officer by the state, except by the  
3 highway patrol for members of the retirement plan created under chapter 39-03.1, or is  
4 employed by a political subdivision and, notwithstanding subsection 14, for persons  
5 employed after August 1, 2005, is employed thirty-two hours or more per week and at  
6 least twenty weeks each year of employment. A peace officer who is a participating  
7 member of the ~~law enforcement~~public safety retirement plan created by this chapter  
8 who begins employment after August 1, 2005, is ineligible to participate concurrently in  
9 any other retirement plan administered by the public employees retirement system.
- 10 ~~44-16.~~ "Permanent employee" means an employee whose services are not limited in duration  
11 and who is filling an approved and regularly funded position in an eligible  
12 governmental unit, and is employed twenty hours or more per week and at least  
13 twenty weeks each year of employment.
- 14 ~~45-17.~~ "Prior service" means service or employment before July 1, 1966.
- 15 ~~46-18.~~ "Prior service credit" means such credit toward a retirement benefit as the retirement  
16 board may determine under the provisions of this chapter.
- 17 ~~47-19.~~ "Public employees retirement system" means the retirement plan and program  
18 established by this chapter.
- 19 ~~48-20.~~ "Retirement" means the acceptance of a retirement allowance under this chapter upon  
20 either termination of employment or termination of participation in the retirement plan.
- 21 ~~49-21.~~ "Retirement board" or "board" means the governing authority created under section  
22 54-52-03.
- 23 ~~20-22.~~ "Seasonal employee" means a participating member who does not work twelve  
24 months a year.
- 25 ~~24 23.~~ "Service" means employment on or after July 1, 1966.
- 26 ~~22-24.~~ "Service benefit" means the credit toward retirement benefits as determined by the  
27 retirement board under the provisions of this chapter.
- 28 ~~23-25.~~ "Temporary employee" means an employee who is not eligible to participate as a  
29 permanent employee, who is at least eighteen years old and not actively contributing  
30 to another employer-sponsored pension fund, and, if employed by a school district,  
31 occupies a noncertified teacher's position.

1 24-26. "Wages" and "salaries" means the member's earnings in eligible employment under  
2 this chapter reported as salary on the member's federal income tax withholding  
3 statements plus any salary reduction or salary deferral amounts under 26 U.S.C. 125,  
4 401(k), 403(b), 414(h), or 457. "Salary" does not include fringe benefits such as  
5 payments for unused sick leave, personal leave, vacation leave paid in a lump sum,  
6 overtime, housing allowances, transportation expenses, early retirement incentive pay,  
7 severance pay, medical insurance, workforce safety and insurance benefits, disability  
8 insurance premiums or benefits, or salary received by a member in lieu of previously  
9 employer-provided fringe benefits under an agreement between the member and  
10 participating employer. Bonuses may be considered as salary under this section if  
11 reported and annualized pursuant to rules adopted by the board.

12 **SECTION 2. AMENDMENT.** Section 54-52-02.1 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
13 amended and reenacted as follows:

14 **54-52-02.1. Political subdivisions authorized to join public employees retirement**  
15 **system.**

- 16 1. A political subdivision may, on behalf of its permanent employees, on behalf of its  
17 peace officers, firefighters, dispatchers public safety telecommunicators, emergency  
medical services personnel, and  
18 correctional officers separately from its other employees, and permanent noncertified  
19 employees only in the case of school districts, enter agreements with the retirement  
20 board for the purpose of extending the benefits of the public employees retirement  
21 system, as provided in this chapter, to those employees. The agreement may, in  
22 accordance with this chapter, contain provisions relating to benefits, contributions,  
23 effective date, modification, administration, and other appropriate provisions as the  
24 retirement board and the political subdivision agree upon, but the agreement must  
25 provide:
- 26 a. The political subdivision will contribute on behalf of each eligible employee an  
27 amount equal to that provided in section 54-52-06 or 54-52-06.3 for peace  
28 officers, firefighters, dispatchers public safety telecommunicators, emergency  
medical services personnel, and  
29 correctional officers participating separately from other political subdivision  
30 employees.

- 1           b. A portion of the moneys paid by the political subdivision may be used to pay  
2           administrative expenses of the retirement board.
- 3           2. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a political subdivision having an existing  
4           police, ~~dispatcher~~public safety telecommunicator, emergency medical services  
5           personnel, or firefighter pension plan  
6           may merge that plan into the public employees retirement system under rules adopted  
7           by and in a manner determined by the board.
- 8           3. Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, a political subdivision of this state  
9           not currently participating in the public employees retirement system may not become  
10          a participant in the retirement system until an actuarial study is performed under the  
11          direction of the board to calculate the required employer contribution for any past  
12          service liability and the required employer contribution must be an amount determined  
13          sufficient to amortize and fund any past service liability over a period not to exceed  
14          thirty years as determined by the board. Any fees incurred in performing the actuarial  
15          study must be paid for by the political subdivision in a manner determined by the  
16          board.

16           **SECTION 3. AMENDMENT.** Section 54-52-02.15 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
17   amended and reenacted as follows:

18           **54-52-02.15. Public employees retirement system main plan - Closure to new hires -**  
19   **Multiple plan membership.**

- 20          1. Under this section "eligible employee" means a permanent employee who:
  - 21           a. Meets all the eligibility requirements set by this chapter;
  - 22           b. Is at least eighteen years of age;
  - 23           c. Becomes a participating member after December 31, 2024; and
  - 24           d. Is not eligible to participate in the ~~law enforcement~~public safety plan, judges' plan,  
25           highway patrol plan, teachers' fund for retirement plan, or alternative retirement  
26           program established under section 15-10-17 for university system employees.
- 27          2. Effective January 1, 2025, the public employees retirement system defined benefit  
28          main plan maintained for employees is closed to new eligible employees. However, an  
29          employee who becomes a participating or deferred member under this chapter before  
30          January 1, 2025, remains in the defined benefit retirement plan under this chapter,  
31          regardless of being rehired after December 31, 2024.



1 3. Except as otherwise provided under this section, effective January 1, 2025, an eligible  
2 employee who begins employment with an employer shall participate in the defined  
3 contribution retirement plan under chapter 54-52.6 as provided under section  
4 54-52.6-02.1.

5 4. This section does not impact an employee to the extent the employee is a participating  
6 member in one or more of the following enumerated retirement plans: ~~law~~  
7 ~~enforcement~~ public safety plan, judges' plan, highway patrol plan, teachers' fund for  
8 retirement plan, or alternative retirement program established under section 15-10-17  
9 for university system employees.

10 a. A participating or deferred member in the defined contribution retirement plan  
11 under chapter 54-52.6 who becomes eligible to participate in a plan enumerated  
12 under this subsection is eligible to participate in the retirement plan enumerated  
13 under this subsection.

14 b. A participating member of a retirement plan enumerated under this subsection  
15 who becomes an eligible employee is not eligible to participate in the defined  
16 benefit retirement plan under this chapter but instead participates in the defined  
17 contribution retirement plan under chapter 54-52.6. However, this subdivision  
18 does not apply to an individual who before January 1, 2025, is a participating or a  
19 deferred member under this chapter, as that individual continues to participate in  
20 the defined benefit retirement plan under this chapter.

21 5. The board shall adopt rules to implement this section.

22 **SECTION 4. AMENDMENT.** Section 54-52-06.3 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
23 amended and reenacted as follows:

24 **54-52-06.3. Contribution by peace officers, firefighters, dispatchers public safety**  
**telecommunicators, emergency**

25 **medical services personnel, and correctional officers employed by political subdivisions**

26 **- Employer contribution.**

27 1. Each peace officer, firefighter, dispatcher public safety telecommunicator, emergency  
medical services personnel, or

28 correctional officer employed by a political subdivision that enters an agreement with  
29 the retirement board on behalf of its peace officers, firefighters, dispatchers public safety  
telecommunicators,

30 emergency medical services personnel, and correctional officers separately from its

other employees and who is a member of the public employees retirement system is

1 assessed and shall pay monthly four percent of the employee's monthly salary. Peace  
2 officer, firefighter, ~~dispatcher~~public safety telecommunicator, emergency medical  
3 services personnel, or correctional  
4 officer contributions increase by one-half of one percent of the member's monthly  
5 salary beginning with the monthly reporting period of January 2012, and with an  
6 additional increase of one-half of one percent, beginning with the monthly reporting  
7 period of January 2013, and with an additional increase of one-half of one percent,  
8 beginning with the monthly reporting period of January 2014. The assessment must be  
9 deducted and retained out of the employee's salary in equal monthly installments.

2. The peace officer's, firefighter's, ~~dispatcher~~public safety telecommunicators,  
emergency medical services

10 personnel's, or correctional officer's employer shall contribute an amount determined  
11 by the board to be actuarially required to support the level of benefits specified in  
12 section 54-52-17. If the peace officer's, firefighter's, ~~dispatcher~~public safety  
13 telecommunicators, emergency medical  
14 services personnel's, or correctional officer's assessment is paid by the employer  
15 under subsection 3 of section 54-52-05, the employer shall contribute, in addition, an  
16 amount equal to the required peace officer's, firefighter's, ~~dispatcher's~~ public safety  
telecommunicators, emergency  
17 medical services personnel's, or correctional officer's assessment.

17 **SECTION 5. AMENDMENT.** Section 54-52-06.4 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
18 amended and reenacted as follows:

19 **54-52-06.4. Contribution by peace officers and ~~dispatchers~~ public safety**  
**telecommunicator employed by the state or**

20 **security officers employed by the national guard - Employer contribution. (Retroactive**  
21 **application - [See note](#))**

22 1. a. Each peace officer employed by the bureau of criminal investigation who is a  
23 member of the public employees retirement system is assessed and shall pay  
24 monthly four percent of the employee's monthly salary. Peace officer  
25 contributions increase by one percent of the member's monthly salary beginning  
26 with the monthly reporting period of January 2012; with an additional increase of  
27 one percent, beginning with the reporting period of January 2013; with an  
28 additional increase of one percent, beginning with the reporting period of  
29 January 2024; and with an additional increase of one percent, beginning with the



1           b. Each ~~dispatcher-public safety telecommunicator~~ and peace officer employed by the  
state, other than a peace

2           officer employed by the bureau of criminal investigation, who is a member of the  
3           public employees retirement system is assessed and shall pay six percent of the  
4           employee's monthly salary.

5           c. Effective August 1, 2015, each national guard security officer who is a member of  
6           the public employee's retirement system is assessed and monthly shall pay  
7           six percent of the employee's monthly salary. National guard security officer  
8           contributions decrease by one-half of one percent of the member's monthly  
9           salary beginning with the monthly reporting period of January 2016.

10          d. The assessment under this subsection must be deducted and retained out of the  
11          employee's salary in equal monthly installments.

12          2. The employer of a ~~dispatcher-public safety telecommunicator~~ or peace officer employed  
by the state or national guard

13          security officer shall contribute an amount determined by the board to be actuarially  
14          required to support the level of benefits specified in section 54-52-17. The employer's  
15          contribution must be paid from funds appropriated for salary or from any other funds  
16          available for such purposes. If the ~~dispatcher's public safety telecommunicators,~~ peace  
officer's, or security officer's

17          assessment is paid by the employer under subsection 3 of section 54-52-05, the  
18          employer shall contribute, in addition, an amount equal to the required  
~~dispatcher's~~ Public safety telecommunicator's,

19          peace officer's, or security officer's assessment.

20          **SECTION 6. AMENDMENT.** Section 54-52-17 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
21          amended and reenacted as follows:

22          **54-52-17. Formulation of plan. (Retroactive application - [See note](#))**

23          Participating members shall receive benefits according to this section and according to  
24          rules adopted by the board, not inconsistent with this chapter. ~~No person~~ An individual is not  
25          entitled to receive a prior service benefit if the ~~person~~ individual was not continuously employed  
26          by a governmental unit in North Dakota for a period of not less than two years immediately ~~prior-~~  
27          to preceding eligibility for retirement.

28          1. Participating members shall receive credit for full-time employment or its equivalent  
29          from the date they attain eligibility until their normal retirement date, postponed  
30          retirement date, or early retirement date, as defined in this section. Part-time

1 employment will be recognized as full-time employment on a prorated basis as the  
2 board may prescribe.

- 3 2. Retirement benefits are calculated from the participating member's final average  
4 salary, which is the average of the highest salary received by the member for any  
5 thirty-six months employed during the last one hundred twenty months of employment.  
6 For members who terminate employment on or after August 1, 2010, final average  
7 salary is the average of the highest salary received by the member for any thirty-six  
8 months employed during the last one hundred eighty months of employment. For  
9 members who terminate employment between July 31, 2005, and August 1, 2010, final  
10 average salary is the average of the highest salary received by the member for any  
11 thirty-six months employed during the period for which the board has appropriate and  
12 accurate salary records on the board's electronic database, but that period may not be  
13 more than the last one hundred eighty months of employment. For members who  
14 terminate employment after December 31, 2019, final average salary is the higher of  
15 the final average salary calculated on December 31, 2019, or the average salary  
16 earned in the three highest periods of twelve consecutive months employed during the  
17 last one hundred eighty months of employment. Months without earnings are excluded  
18 for the purpose of computing an average. If the participating member has worked for  
19 less than thirty-six months at the normal retirement date, the final average salary is the  
20 average salary for the total months of employment.

- 21 3. Retirement dates are defined as follows:

22 a. Normal retirement date, except for a national guard security officer or firefighter, a  
23 ~~firefighter employed by a political subdivision, a dispatcher, a public safety~~  
~~telecommunicator~~ or peace officer

24 employed by the state, or a firefighter, dispatcher, public safety telecommunicator,  
emergency medical services

25 personnel, peace officer, or correctional officer employed by a political  
26 subdivision, is:

- 27 (1) The first day of the month next following the month in which the member  
28 attains the age of sixty-five years; or  
29 (2) When the member has a combined total of years of service credit and years  
30 of age equal to eighty-five and has not received a retirement benefit under  
31 this chapter.

1           b. Normal retirement date for members first enrolled after December 31, 2015,  
2           except for a national guard security officer or firefighter, a ~~firefighter employed by~~  
3           a political subdivision, ~~a dispatcher a public safety telecommunicator~~ or peace officer  
4           employed by the state, a  
5           firefighter, dispatcher public safety telecommunicator, emergency medical services  
6           personnel, peace officer, or  
7           correctional officer employed by a political subdivision, or a supreme court or  
8           district court judge, is:

- 7           (1) The first day of the month next following the month in which the member  
8           attains the age of sixty-five years; or  
9           (2) When the member has a combined total of years of service credit and years  
10           of age equal to ninety and the member attains a minimum age of sixty and  
11           has not received a retirement benefit under this chapter.

12          c. Normal retirement date for a national guard security officer or firefighter is:

- 13          (1) The first day of the month next following the month in which the national  
14          guard security officer or firefighter attains the age of fifty-five years and has  
15          completed at least three eligible years of employment; or  
16          (2) When the national guard security officer or firefighter has a combined total  
17          of years of service credit and years of age equal to eighty-five and has not  
18          received a retirement benefit under this chapter.

19          d. Normal retirement date for a ~~dispatcher public safety telecommunicator~~,  
20          emergency medical services personnel,

21          peace officer, firefighter, or correctional officer employed by a political subdivision  
22          is:

- 23          (1) The first day of the month next following the month in which the  
24          dispatcher public safety telecommunicator,  
25          emergency medical services personnel, peace officer, firefighter, or  
26          correctional officer attains the age of fifty-five years and has completed at  
27          least three eligible years of employment; or  
28          (2) When the ~~dispatcher public safety telecommunicator~~, emergency medical  
29          services personnel, peace officer,  
30          firefighter, or correctional officer has a combined total of years of service  
31          credit and years of age equal to eighty-five and has not received a  
32          retirement benefit under this chapter.

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- 30 e. (1) Normal retirement date for a peace officer employed by the bureau of  
31 criminal investigation is:



- 1 (a) [1] For a member employed before August 1, 2023, the first day of  
2 the month next following the month in which the peace officer  
3 attains the age of fifty-five years and has completed at least  
4 three eligible years of employment; and
- 5 [2] For a member employed after July 31, 2023, the first day of the  
6 month next following the month in which the peace officer attains  
7 the age of fifty-five years and has completed at least ten eligible  
8 years of employment; or
- 9 (b) When the peace officer has a combined total of years of service credit  
10 and years of age equal to eighty-five and has not received a  
11 retirement benefit under this chapter.
- 12 (2) Normal retirement date for a dispatcher-public safety telecommunicator or  
peace officer employed by the  
13 state, other than a peace officer employed by the bureau of criminal  
14 investigation, is:
- 15 (a) The first day of the month next following the month in which the  
16 dispatcher or peace officer attains the age of fifty-five years and has  
17 completed at least three eligible years of employment; or
- 18 (b) When the dispatcher-public safety telecommunicator or peace officer  
has a combined total of years of  
19 service credit and years of age equal to eighty-five and has not  
20 received a retirement benefit under this chapter.
- 21 f. Postponed retirement date is the first day of the month next following the month  
22 in which the member, on or after July 1, 1977, actually severs or has severed the  
23 member's employment after reaching the normal retirement date.
- 24 g. (1) Early retirement date, except for a national guard security officer or  
25 firefighter, a dispatcher-public safety telecommunicator, emergency medical  
services personnel, firefighter,  
26 peace officer, or correctional officer employed by a political subdivision, or a  
27 dispatcher-public safety telecommunicator or peace officer employed by the  
state, is the first day of the  
28 month next following the month in which the member attains the age of  
29 fifty-five years and has completed three years of eligible employment.
- 30 (2) For a national guard security officer or firefighter, early retirement date is the



1 security officer or firefighter attains the age of fifty years and has completed  
2 at least three years of eligible employment.

3 (3) For a ~~dispatcher public safety telecommunicator~~ or peace officer employed by  
the state, other than a peace

4 officer employed by the bureau of criminal investigation, or a ~~dispatcher public~~  
~~safety telecommunicator~~

5 ~~emergency medical services personnel~~, firefighter, peace officer, or

6 correctional officer employed by a political subdivision, early retirement date

7 is the first day of the month next following the month in which the  
~~dispatcher public safety telecommunicator~~

8 ~~emergency medical services personnel~~, peace officer, firefighter, or

9 correctional officer attains the age of fifty years and has completed at least

10 three years of eligible employment.

11 (4) For a peace officer employed by the bureau of criminal investigation, early

12 retirement date is the first day of the month next following the month in

13 which the peace officer attains the age of fifty years and has completed at

14 least three years of eligible employment.

15 h. Disability retirement date is the first day of the month after a member becomes  
16 permanently and totally disabled, according to medical evidence called for under  
17 the rules of the board, and has completed at least one hundred eighty days of  
18 eligible employment. For supreme and district court judges, permanent and total  
19 disability is based solely on a judge's inability to perform judicial duties arising out  
20 of physical or mental impairment, as determined pursuant to rules adopted by the  
21 board or as provided by subdivision a of subsection 3 of section 27-23-03.

22 (1) A member is eligible to receive disability retirement benefits only if the  
23 member became disabled during the period of eligible employment and  
24 applies for disability retirement benefits within twelve months of the date the  
25 member terminates employment.

26 (2) A member is eligible to continue to receive disability benefits as long as the  
27 permanent and total disability continues and the member submits the  
28 necessary documentation and undergoes medical testing required by the  
29 board, or for as long as the member participates in a rehabilitation program  
30 required by the board, or both. If the board determines a member no longer

meets the eligibility definition, the board may discontinue the disability

1 retirement benefit. The board may pay the cost of any medical testing or  
2 rehabilitation services the board deems necessary and these payments are  
3 appropriated from the retirement fund for those purposes. A member's  
4 receipt of disability benefits under this section is limited to receipt from the  
5 fund to which the member was actively contributing at the time the member  
6 became disabled.

7 4. The board shall calculate retirement benefits as follows:

8 a. Normal retirement benefits for all retirees, except supreme and district court  
9 judges; and peace officers employed by the bureau of criminal investigation, ~~and~~  
10 ~~other peace officers employed by the state~~, reaching normal retirement date  
11 equal an annual amount, payable monthly, comprised of a service benefit and a  
12 prior service benefit, as defined in this chapter, which is determined as follows:

13 (1) For members first enrolled:

14 (a) Before January 1, 2020, service benefit equals two percent of final  
15 average salary multiplied by the number of years of service  
16 employment.

17 (b) After December 31, 2019, service benefit equals one and seventy-five  
18 hundredths percent of final average salary multiplied by the number of  
19 years of service employment.

20 (2) Prior service benefit equals two percent of final average salary multiplied by  
21 the number of years of prior service employment.

22 b. Normal retirement benefits for all supreme and district court judges under the  
23 public employees retirement system reaching normal retirement date equal an  
24 annual amount, payable monthly, comprised of a benefit as defined in this  
25 chapter, determined as follows:

26 (1) Benefits must be calculated from the time of appointment or election to the  
27 bench and must equal three and one-half percent of final average salary  
28 multiplied by the first ten years of judicial service, two and eighty hundredths  
29 percent of final average salary multiplied by the second ten years of judicial  
30 service, and one and one-fourth percent of final average salary multiplied by  
31 the number of years of judicial service exceeding twenty years.

- 1 (2) Service benefits must include, in addition, an amount equal to the percent  
2 specified in subdivision a of final average salary multiplied by the number of  
3 years of nonjudicial employee service and employment.
- 4 c. Normal retirement benefits for a peace officer employed by the bureau of criminal  
5 investigation reaching the normal retirement date equals an annual amount,  
6 payable monthly, comprised of a service benefit and a prior service benefit  
7 determined as follows:
- 8 (1) The first twenty years of credited service multiplied by three percent of final  
9 average salary.
- 10 (2) For years in excess of twenty years of credited service multiplied by one  
11 and seventy-five hundredths percent of final average salary.
- 12 ~~d. Normal retirement benefits for a peace officer employed by the state, other than~~  
13 ~~by the bureau of criminal investigation, reaching the normal retirement date~~  
14 ~~equals an annual amount, payable monthly, comprised of a service benefit and a~~  
15 ~~prior service benefit determined as follows:~~
- 16 ~~(1) For members first enrolled:~~
- 17 ~~(a) Before January 1, 2020, service benefit equals two percent of final~~  
18 ~~average salary multiplied by the number of years of service~~  
19 ~~employment.~~
- 20 ~~(b) After December 31, 2019, service benefit equals one and seventy five~~  
21 ~~hundredths percent of final average salary multiplied by the number of~~  
22 ~~years of service employment.~~
- 23 ~~(2) Prior service benefit equals two percent of final average salary multiplied by~~  
24 ~~the number of years of prior service employment.~~
- 25 e. Postponed retirement benefits are calculated as for single life benefits for those  
26 members who retired on or after July 1, 1977.
- 27 f.e. Early retirement benefits are calculated as for single life benefits accrued to the  
28 date of termination of employment, but must be actuarially reduced to account for  
29 benefit payments beginning before the normal retirement date, as determined  
30 under subsection 3. Except for a national guard security officer or firefighter, a  
31 dispatcher public safety telecommunicator, emergency medical services personnel,  
firefighter, peace officer, or

- 1                   correctional officer employed by a political subdivision, a dispatcher-public safety  
2                   telecommunicator or peace  
3                   officer employed by the state, or a supreme court or district court judge, early  
4                   retirement benefits for members first enrolled after December 31, 2015, are  
5                   calculated for single life benefits accrued to the date of termination of  
6                   employment, but must be reduced by fixed rate of eight percent per year to  
7                   account for benefit payments beginning before the normal retirement date. A  
8                   retiree, other than a supreme or district court judge, is eligible for early retirement  
9                   benefits only after having completed three years of eligible employment. A  
10                  supreme or district court judge retiree is eligible for early retirement benefits only  
11                  after having completed five years of eligible employment.
- 11                  g-f. Except for supreme and district court judges, disability retirement benefits are  
12                  twenty-five percent of the member's final average salary. Disability retirement  
13                  benefits for supreme and district court judges are seventy percent of final  
14                  average salary reduced by the member's primary social security benefits and by  
15                  any workforce safety and insurance benefits paid. The minimum monthly  
16                  disability retirement benefit under this section is one hundred dollars.
- 17                  5. Upon termination of employment after completing three years of eligible employment,  
18                  except for supreme and district court judges, who must complete five years of eligible  
19                  employment, but before normal retirement date, a member who does not elect to  
20                  receive early retirement benefits is eligible to receive deferred vested retirement  
21                  benefits payable commencing on the member's normal retirement date in one of the  
22                  optional forms provided in subsection 9. Members who have delayed or inadvertently  
23                  failed to apply for retirement benefits to commence on their normal retirement date  
24                  may choose to receive either a lump sum payment equal to the amount of missed  
25                  payments, or an actuarial increase to the form of benefit the member has selected,  
26                  which increase must reflect the missed payments.
- 27                  6. If before retiring a member dies after completing three years of eligible employment,  
28                  except for supreme and district court judges, who must have completed five years of  
29                  eligible employment, the board shall pay the member's account balance to the  
30                  member's designated beneficiary as provided in this subsection. If the member has  
31                  designated an alternate beneficiary with the surviving spouse's written consent, the

1 board shall pay the member's account balance to the named beneficiary. If the  
2 member has named more than one primary beneficiary, the board shall pay the  
3 member's account balance to the named primary beneficiaries in the percentages  
4 designated by the member or, if the member has not designated a percentage for the  
5 beneficiaries, in equal percentages. If one or more of the primary beneficiaries has  
6 predeceased the member, the board shall pay the predeceased beneficiary's share to  
7 the remaining primary beneficiaries. If any beneficiary survives the member, yet dies  
8 before distribution of the beneficiary's share, the beneficiary must be treated as if the  
9 beneficiary predeceased the member. If there are no remaining primary beneficiaries,  
10 the board shall pay the member's account balance to the contingent beneficiaries in  
11 the same manner. If there are no remaining designated beneficiaries, the board shall  
12 pay the member's account balance to the member's estate. If the member has not  
13 designated an alternate beneficiary or the surviving spouse is the beneficiary, the  
14 surviving spouse of the member may select a form of payment as follows:

15 a. If the member was a supreme or district court judge, the surviving spouse may  
16 select one of the following optional forms of payment:

17 (1) A lump sum payment of the member's retirement account as of the date of  
18 death.

19 (2) Payments as calculated for the deceased member as if the member was of  
20 normal retirement age at the date of death, payable until the spouse dies.

21 b. The surviving spouse of all other members may select one of the following  
22 options:

23 (1) A lump sum payment of the member's retirement account as of the date of  
24 death.

25 (2) Payment of a monthly retirement benefit equal to fifty percent of the  
26 deceased member's accrued single life retirement benefits until the spouse  
27 dies.

28 (3) If the member dies on or after the member's normal retirement date, the  
29 payment of a monthly retirement benefit equal to an amount that would have  
30 been paid to the surviving spouse if the member had retired on the day of  
31 the member's death and had selected a one hundred percent joint and



1 survivor annuity, payable until the spouse dies. A surviving spouse who  
2 received a benefit under this subsection as of July 31, 1995, is entitled to  
3 the higher of that person's existing benefit or the equivalent of the accrued  
4 benefit available under the one hundred percent joint and survivor provision  
5 as if the deceased member were of normal retirement age, with the increase  
6 payable beginning August 1, 1995.

7 7. If a member not coming under the provisions of subsection 6 terminates employment  
8 because of death, permanent and total disability, or any voluntary or involuntary  
9 reason prior to retirement, the member or the member's designated beneficiary is  
10 entitled to the member's account balance at termination. The board automatically shall  
11 refund a member's account balance if the member has completed less than three  
12 years of eligible employment, has an account balance of less than one thousand  
13 dollars, and was not a supreme or district court judge. If the member was a supreme  
14 or district court judge, the board automatically shall refund a member's account  
15 balance if the member completed less than five years of eligible employment. A  
16 member may waive the refund if the member submits a written statement to the board,  
17 within thirty days after termination, requesting that the member's account balance  
18 remain in the fund.

19 8. The surviving spouse of a member receiving retirement benefits must be the  
20 member's primary beneficiary unless there is no surviving spouse or the surviving  
21 spouse designates an alternate beneficiary in writing. If a member receiving retirement  
22 benefits or the member's surviving spouse receiving retirement benefits dies before  
23 the total amount of benefits paid to either or both equals the amount of the member's  
24 account balance at retirement, the difference must be paid to the named beneficiary of  
25 the recipient or, if there is no named beneficiary, to the recipient's estate. A benefit  
26 payment owed to the member, surviving spouse, or alternate beneficiary which was  
27 not paid before the death of the member, surviving spouse, or alternate beneficiary  
28 must be paid to the named beneficiary of the recipient or, if there is no named  
29 beneficiary, to the recipient's estate.

30 9. The board shall adopt rules providing for the receipt of retirement benefits in the  
31 following optional forms:

- 1 a. Single life.
- 2 b. An actuarially equivalent joint and survivor option, with fifty percent or one
- 3 hundred percent options.
- 4 c. Actuarially equivalent life with ten-year or twenty-year certain options.
- 5 d. An actuarially equivalent partial lump sum distribution option with a twelve-month
- 6 maximum lump sum distribution.
- 7 e. An actuarially equivalent graduated benefit option with either a one percent or
- 8 two percent increase to be applied the first day of January of each year.

9 Except for supreme and district court judges, unless a member specifically requests  
10 that the member receive benefits according to one of these options at the time of  
11 applying for retirement, all retirement benefits must be in the form of a single life  
12 benefit. For supreme and district court judges, unless a member specifically requests  
13 that the member receive benefits according to one of these options at the time of  
14 applying for retirement, all retirement benefits must be in the form of a lifetime monthly  
15 pension with fifty percent of the benefit continuing for the life of the surviving spouse, if  
16 any.

- 17 10. The fund may accept rollovers from other eligible plans under rules adopted by the  
18 board for the purchase of additional service credit, but only to the extent the transfer is  
19 a rollover contribution that meets the requirement of section 408 of the Internal  
20 Revenue Code.
- 21 11. The board may accept trustee-to-trustee transfers as permitted by Internal Revenue  
22 Code section 403(b)(13) and section 457(e)(17) from an Internal Revenue Code  
23 section 403(b) annuity or Internal Revenue Code section 457 deferred compensation  
24 plan for the purchase of permissive service credit, as defined in Internal Revenue  
25 Code section 415(n)(3)(A) or as repayment of a cashout from a governmental plan  
26 under Internal Revenue Code section 415(k)(3).
- 27 12. The board may establish individual retirement accounts and individual retirement  
28 annuities as permitted under section 408(q) of the Internal Revenue Code to allow  
29 employees to make voluntary employee contributions. The board may adopt rules to  
30 implement and administer the accounts and annuities under this section.