

Sen. Edith Prague and Rep. Kevin Ryan, Chairmen
Labor and Public Employees Committee

Written Comments in Support of Proposed House Bill – 6300 – An Act Concerning Credit In The State Employees Retirement System For Prior State Service In Rhode Island.

My name is Alan N. Ponanski of 161 Newberry Road, East Haddam, Connecticut. I have been a Connecticut state employee for approximately 16 years. I am writing to comment favorably on Proposed House Bill – 6300 – An Act Concerning Credit In The State Employees Retirement System For Prior State Service In Rhode Island.

It is my understanding that the purpose of PHB 6300 is to permit a current state employee to purchase credit under tier I or IIa, or to receive credit under tier II, in the state employees retirement system for prior service with the state of Rhode Island, provided the individual is not entitled to receive retirement benefits from Rhode Island.

Since 1992, I have sought retirement credit from Connecticut for five years of prior service as a Rhode Island state employee. In the 2005 session, Rep. Orange, Rep. Ryan and Rep. Mushinsky sponsored an amendment, LCO No. 6888, to House Bill 7001, "An Act Concerning the Purchase of Credit for Retirement Purposes Under the State Employees Retirement System." The bill was never brought to a vote. I respectfully request that PHB 6300 be approved by your committee and sent to the General Assembly for its approval this session to permit me to obtain retirement credits for my five years of service in Rhode Island.

Conn. Gen. Stat. 5-191 allows state employees to apply for retirement credit for service to other states that provide reciprocity for Connecticut employees who move to and are employed in public service in their states. I sought to apply this statute to my own case and be credited for prior service at no cost to me. However, Rhode Island currently only recognizes teachers, not state employees of Connecticut for retirement credit.

My only recourse now is to seek to purchase the credit, which requires authorization by the General Assembly. As a Tier II state employee, I am not required to make contributions to my retirement plan. However, I am willing to purchase retirement credit according to a statutory formula that has been used extensively by Tier I members and others (see C.G.S. 5-177, 5-181(a), 5-181a and 5-177). (See House Bill No. 7001). I have omitted other Connecticut statutes dealing with prior municipal service credit – C.G.S. 5-192j (e) and prior public school service – C.G.S. 5-191, which allow retirement credit without purchase in some cases.

Most of my life's work has been spent in service to federal and state governments, including my 15 years in Connecticut. My prior government service and experience as budget analyst for the federal government and budget director for the R.I. Department of Transportation has greatly benefited the State of Connecticut in my legal work as counsel to the Connecticut Department of Transportation. Being allowed to purchase credit for

five years of service in Rhode Island would be recognition of that service and close a retirement gap.

Also, I believe that equity and fairness requires the state to allow me, as it has done for others, to purchase service from which the state has benefited. Moreover, the state should not treat my service differently from Tier I employees who are given or can purchase credits or who have the luck to have worked for a state having reciprocal credit agreements with Connecticut . In my case, the distinctions are arbitrary.

In sum, I support PHB 6300 and respectfully request it be approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan N. Ponanski
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