
OLR Bill Analysis

HB 6596 (as amended by House "A" and "B")*

AN ACT CONCERNING POLICE OFFICERS AND FIREFIGHTERS.

SUMMARY:

Current law prohibits municipal police and firefighters covered under state (Connecticut Municipal Employee Retirement System (CMERS)) or local retirement systems from participating in the Social Security system. This bill removes the prohibition for police and fire service performed on or after August 16, 1994.

It allows these employees and their municipal employers to begin a process, which includes a referendum, leading to their participation in Social Security. Federal law requires a referendum for police and firefighters to participate in the system, but state law prohibits this. Under the bill, a municipality can request a referendum for police and firefighters with service after August 16, 1994 to begin the statutory steps for joining the Social Security system (see BACKGROUND).

*House Amendment "A" replaces the underlying bill, which complied with the federal Social Security Act's requirements for extending Medicare coverage to members of municipal police and fire departments who (1) became municipal employees before April 1, 1986 and (2) have been continuously working since March 31 of that year or earlier as police officers or firefighters in positions covered by a public retirement system.

*House Amendment "B" makes the language gender neutral by substituting policemen and firemen with police officer and firefighter.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

BACKGROUND

The Social Security Act (SSA, § 18) provides for voluntary agreements between the social security commissioner and the state to

extend Social Security insurance coverage to services performed by state and municipal employees. State law implements the procedures for such agreements (CGS §§ 7-452-7-459). The SSA (§ 418(d)(5)(A)) essentially prohibited the extension of the Social Security insurance system “to service in any policeman’s or fireman’s position.” The SSA (§ 418l as amended) provided that an agreement could be modified to apply to service performed by employees in policeman’s or fireman’s position covered by a retirement system in effect on or after August 1, 1956 but only upon compliance with referendum requirements.

State law bars such referendums with respect to certain services excluded under state law (CGS § 7-455(1)). These include “services of individuals in policemen’s or firemen’s positions covered under fund A or fund B (CMERS) or local retirement systems” (CGS § 7-454(2)).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 24 Nay 0 (03/21/2013)

Planning and Development Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 19 Nay 0 (04/23/2013)