

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2022 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 594

FISCAL
NOTE

BY SENATORS LINDSAY AND WOELFEL

[Introduced February 08, 2022; referred to
the Committee on Pensions; and then to the
Committee on Finance]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new section,
 2 designated §5-10-56, relating to establishing a class of employees within the West Virginia
 3 Public Employees Retirement System consisting of 911 staff; and providing for lower
 4 retirement age and increased pension payments.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 10. WEST VIRGINIA PUBLIC EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT ACT.

§5-10-56. Different benefits available to 911 staff in separate class.

1 (a) There is established on July 1, 2022, in the West Virginia Public Employees Retirement
 2 System a separate class consisting of staff employed by 911 offices. Eligible employees who are
 3 or were previously a member of the Public Employees Retirement system may choose whether
 4 to be included in the new class or retain their existing benefit plan.

5 (b) Normal retirement age for members of the class for staff employed as 911 officers shall
 6 be age 50 with age plus years of service equaling 70 or age 60 with years of service equaling 65,
 7 or if not working at retirement, age 62 and five years of service. Years of service shall be at least
 8 50 percent actual service as a 911 employee. Retirement benefits for class members shall be 2.5
 9 percent of final average salary calculated using the five highest consecutive plan years of
 10 earnings out of the last 10 years of earnings.

11 (c) The board shall calculate by July 1, 2022, the actuarially appropriate employee and
 12 employer contributions required to sustain the increased benefits provided for the class. Current
 13 members of the Public Employees Retirement System who have not retired, who are eligible for
 14 the new classification, shall notify the board in writing by July 1, 2022, requesting information on
 15 how much the member would need to contribute to the Public Employees Retirement System in
 16 order to transfer to the class and receive the enhanced benefits. By August 1, 2022, the board
 17 shall inform members wishing to transfer into the new system how much they are required to pay
 18 to accomplish transfer. The amount of difference in employee contributions shall be paid to the
 19 Public Employees Retirement System by October 1, 2022.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to provide for enhanced retirement benefits for 911 staff as members within the Public Employees Retirement system. In 2020 the West Virginia Legislature recognized the State's 911 staff as "First Responders" in acknowledgment of the live-saving work 911 staff members perform 365 days a year.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.