

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2007

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HOUSE DRH80391-LL-163A* (3/7)

Short Title: Separation Allowance/Firefighters & EMS. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative J. Harrell.

Referred to:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A SPECIAL SEPARATION ALLOWANCE FOR
CAREER FIREFIGHTERS AND CAREER RESCUE SQUAD WORKERS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Chapter 143 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a
new Article to read:

"Article 12G.

"Separation Allowances for Career Firefighters and Career Rescue Squad Workers.

"§ 143-166.90. Definitions.

As used in this Article:

- (1) "Beneficiary" means any person in receipt of a retirement allowance or other benefit from the Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System.
- (2) "Career firefighter" means a person (i) who is a full-time paid employee of an employer that participates in the Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System and maintains a fire department certified by the North Carolina Department of Insurance, and (ii) who is actively serving in a position with assigned primary duties and responsibilities for the prevention, detection, and suppression of fire.
- (3) "Career rescue squad worker" means a person (i) who is a full-time paid employee of an employer that participates in the Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System and maintains a rescue squad or emergency medical services team certified by the North Carolina Department of Insurance or the Department of Health and Human Services, and (ii) who is actively serving in a position with assigned primary duties and responsibilities for the alleviation of human suffering and assistance to persons who are in difficulty, who

1 are injured, or who become suddenly ill, by providing proper and
2 efficient care or emergency medical services.

3 (4) "Employer" means a county, city, town, or other political subdivision
4 of this State that participates in the Local Governmental Employees'
5 Retirement System.

6 **"§ 143-166.91. Special separation allowances for career firefighter and career**
7 **rescue squad workers.**

8 (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, every career firefighter and
9 career rescue squad worker who is employed by local government employers who
10 qualify under this section shall receive, beginning in the month in which the firefighter
11 or rescue squad worker retires on a basic service retirement under the provisions of
12 G.S. 128-27(a), (a1), or (a2), an annual separation allowance equal to five hundred
13 seventy-five thousandths percent (0.575%) of the annual equivalent of the base rate of
14 compensation most recently applicable to him for each year of creditable service. The
15 allowance shall be paid in equal installments on the payroll frequency used by the
16 employer. To qualify for the allowance the officer shall:

17 (1) Have (i) completed 30 or more years of creditable service or, (ii) have
18 attained 55 years of age and completed five or more years of creditable
19 service; and

20 (2) Not have become eligible for unreduced Social Security benefits; and

21 (3) Have completed at least five years of continuous service as a career
22 firefighter or career rescue squad worker as herein defined
23 immediately preceding a service retirement. Any break in the
24 continuous service required by this subsection because of disability
25 retirement benefits shall not adversely affect the qualification of a
26 firefighter or rescue squad worker to receive the allowance, provided
27 the firefighter or rescue squad worker returns to service within 45 days
28 after the disability benefits cease and is otherwise qualified to receive
29 the allowance. However, a firefighter or rescue squad worker who is
30 permanently disabled in the line of duty shall be eligible to receive the
31 allowance beginning in the month after the firefighter or rescue squad
32 worker would have completed 30 years of service but for the
33 disability.

34 (b) As used in this section, "creditable service" means the service for which
35 credit is allowed under the retirement system of which the firefighter or rescue squad
36 worker is a member, provided that at least fifty percent (50%) of the service is as a
37 career firefighter or rescue squad worker as herein defined.

38 (c) Payment to a retired firefighter or rescue squad worker under the provisions
39 of this section shall cease at:

40 (1) The last day of the month following the death of the firefighter or
41 rescue squad worker;

42 (2) The last day of the month in which the firefighter or rescue squad
43 worker becomes eligible for unreduced Social Security benefits; or

44 (3) The first day of reemployment by any local employer.

1 (d) This section does not affect the benefits to which an individual may be
2 entitled from State, federal, or private retirement systems. The benefits payable under
3 this section shall not be subject to any increases in salary or retirement allowances that
4 may be granted to local employees by any local employer.

5 (e) The head of each local employer shall determine the eligibility of employees
6 for the benefits provided herein.

7 (f) The Board of Trustees of the Local Governmental Employees' Retirement
8 System shall create a special trust fund to become effective October 1, 2007. The
9 purpose of this trust fund is to collect and accumulate funds paid by employers of
10 firefighters and rescue squad workers who are participating in the Local Governmental
11 Employees' Retirement System. These funds are to be used to pay for the special
12 separation benefit for those firefighters and rescue squad workers who retire on or after
13 July 1, 2008. The Board shall have their consulting actuary calculate a percentage of
14 payroll cost based on the firefighters and rescue squad workers participating in the
15 System as of December 31 of each year."

16 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2008, except that
17 G.S. 143-166.91(f) becomes effective October 1, 2007.