

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2011

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HOUSE BILL 1074
Committee Substitute Favorable 6/13/12

Short Title: Stop Waste, Fraud, and Abuse in Govt. Act.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

May 24, 2012

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO MAKE CHANGES TO THE STATUTES GOVERNING THE TEACHERS' AND STATE EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM, THE LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM, AND THE DISABILITY INCOME PLAN OF NORTH CAROLINA TO PROVIDE PROTECTION AND REMEDIES FOR REPORTING VIOLATIONS OF RETIREMENT LAW; TO ESTABLISH GUIDELINES FOR FRAUD INVESTIGATIONS THAT WILL ENHANCE THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE TREASURER'S CAPABILITY TO PREVENT AND DETECT FRAUD, WASTE, AND ABUSE; TO MAKE IT A CLASS 1 MISDEMEANOR TO FRAUDULENTLY RECEIVE A DECEDENT'S MONTHLY DISABILITY BENEFIT; AND TO CLARIFY THE APPOINTMENT OF THE MEDICAL BOARD.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Article 3 of Chapter 128 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 128-38.6. Employee protection and remedies against unlawful retaliation for furnishing information to the Retirement Systems Division.

(a) In the absence of fraud or malice, no person who furnishes information to the staff of the Retirement Systems Division relating to the investigation of possible violations of retirement law shall be liable for damages in a civil action for any oral or written statement made or any other action that is necessary to supply such information to the Division.

(b) Any employee of a participating local employer who is discharged, demoted, suspended, threatened, harassed, or in any other manner discriminated against in the terms and conditions of employment by the employee's employer because of lawful acts done by the employee in furtherance of the Retirement Systems Division's receipt of information concerning possible violations of retirement law, including cooperation with the Division's investigation of possible violations, shall be entitled to all relief necessary to make the employee whole. Relief shall include reinstatement with the same seniority status as the employee would have had but for the discrimination or retaliation by the employing unit, two times the amount of back pay, interest on the back pay, and compensation for any special damages sustained as a result of the discrimination or retaliation, including litigation costs and reasonable attorneys' fees. An employee may bring an action in superior court for the relief provided in this section."

SECTION 2.(a) G.S. 128-21 reads as rewritten:

"§ 128-21. Definitions.

The following words and phrases as used in this Article, unless a different meaning is plainly required by the context, shall have the following meanings:



1 ...
 2 (11b) "Firefighter" means a person (i) who is a full-time paid employee of an
 3 employer that participates in the Local Governmental Employees'
 4 Retirement System and maintains a fire department certified by the North
 5 Carolina Department of Insurance and (ii) who is actively serving in a
 6 position with assigned primary duties and responsibilities for the prevention,
 7 detection, and suppression of fire.

8 (11c) "Fraud investigation" means an independent review or examination by
 9 Retirement Systems Division staff or the Division's authorized
 10 representatives who are assisting the Retirement Systems Division staff of
 11 activities, actions, or decisions by employers or other affiliated or associated
 12 entities having an impact on the Retirement System. The purpose of a fraud
 13 investigation is to help detect and prevent fraud and to ensure full
 14 accountability in the use of pension funds.

15 ~~(11e)~~(11d) "Law Enforcement Officer" means a full-time paid employee of an
 16 employer, who possesses the power of arrest, who has taken the law
 17 enforcement oath administered under the authority of the State as prescribed
 18 by G.S. 11-11, and who is certified as a law enforcement officer under the
 19 provisions of Chapter 17C of the General Statutes or certified as a deputy
 20 sheriff under the provisions of Chapter 17E of the General Statutes. "Law
 21 enforcement officer" also means the sheriff of the county. The number of
 22 paid personnel employed as law enforcement officers by a law enforcement
 23 agency may not exceed the number of law enforcement positions approved
 24 by the applicable local governing board.

25"

26 **SECTION 2.(b)** G.S. 135-1 reads as rewritten:

27 **"§ 135-1. Definitions.**

28 The following words and phrases as used in this Chapter, unless a different meaning is
 29 plainly required by the context, shall have the following meanings:

30 ...

31 (11a) "Filing" when used in reference to an application for retirement shall mean
 32 the receipt of an acceptable application on a form provided by the
 33 Retirement System.

34 (11b) "Fraud investigation" means an independent review or examination by
 35 Retirement Systems Division staff or the Division's authorized
 36 representatives who are assisting the Retirement Systems Division staff of
 37 activities, actions, or decisions by employers or other affiliated or associated
 38 entities having an impact on the Retirement System. The purpose of a fraud
 39 investigation is to help detect and prevent fraud and to ensure full
 40 accountability in the use of pension funds.

41 ~~(11b)~~(11c) "Law-Enforcement Officer" means a full-time paid employee of an employer
 42 who is actively serving in a position with assigned primary duties and
 43 responsibilities for prevention and detection of crime or the general
 44 enforcement of the criminal laws of the State of North Carolina or serving
 45 civil processes, and who possesses the power of arrest by virtue of an oath
 46 administered under the authority of the State.

47"

48 **SECTION 2.(c)** G.S. 128-28 is amended by adding three new subsections to read:

49 "(r) Fraud Investigations – Access to Persons and Records. – In the course of conducting
 50 a fraud investigation, the Retirement Systems Division and the Division's authorized
 51 representatives shall:

1 (1) Have ready access to persons and may examine and copy all books, records,
2 reports, vouchers, correspondence, files, personnel files, investments, and
3 any other documentation of any employer. The review of State tax returns
4 shall be limited to matters of official business, and the Division's report shall
5 not violate the confidentiality provisions of tax laws.

6 (2) Have such access to persons, records, papers, reports, vouchers,
7 correspondence, books, and any other documentation that is in the
8 possession of any individual, private corporation, institution, association,
9 board, or other organization which pertain to the following:

10 a. Amounts received pursuant to a grant or contract from the federal
11 government, the State, or its political subdivisions.

12 b. Amounts received, disbursed, or otherwise handled on behalf of the
13 federal government or the State. In order to determine that payments
14 to providers of social and medical services are legal and proper, the
15 providers of such services will give the Retirement Systems Division,
16 or Retirement Systems Division's authorized representatives, access
17 to the records of recipients who receive such services.

18 (3) Have the authority, and shall be provided with ready access, to examine and
19 inspect all property, equipment, and facilities in the possession of any
20 employer agency or any individual, private corporation, institution,
21 association, board, or other organization that were furnished or otherwise
22 provided through grant, contract, or any other type of funding by the
23 employer agency.

24 (s) Fraud Investigative Reports and Work Papers. – The Director of the Retirement
25 Systems Division shall maintain for 10 years a complete file of all fraud investigative reports
26 and reports of other examinations, investigations, surveys, and reviews issued under the
27 Director's authority. Fraud investigation work papers and other evidence or related supportive
28 material directly pertaining to the work of the Retirement Systems Division of the Department
29 of State Treasurer shall be retained according to an agreement between the Director of
30 Retirement and State Archives. To promote intergovernmental cooperation and avoid
31 unnecessary duplication of fraud investigative effort, and notwithstanding local unit personnel
32 policies to the contrary, pertinent work papers and other supportive material relating to issued
33 fraud investigation reports may be, at the discretion of the Director of Retirement and unless
34 otherwise prohibited by law, made available for inspection by duly authorized representatives
35 of the State and federal government who desire access to and inspection of such records in
36 connection with some matter officially before them, including criminal investigations. Except
37 as provided in this section, or upon an order issued in Wake County Superior Court upon 10
38 days' notice and hearing finding that access is necessary to a proper administration of justice,
39 fraud investigation work papers and related supportive material shall be kept confidential,
40 including any information developed as a part of the investigation.

41 (t) Fraud Reports May Be Anonymous. – The identity of any person reporting fraud,
42 waste, and abuse to the Retirement Systems Division shall be kept confidential and shall not be
43 maintained as a public record within the meaning of G.S. 132-1."

44 **SECTION 2.(d)** G.S. 135-6 is amended by adding three new subsections to read:

45 "(q) Fraud Investigations – Access to Persons and Records. – In the course of conducting
46 a fraud investigation, the Retirement Systems Division and the Division's authorized
47 representatives shall:

48 (1) Have ready access to persons and may examine and copy all books, records,
49 reports, vouchers, correspondence, files, personnel files, investments, and
50 any other documentation of any employer. The review of State tax returns

1 shall be limited to matters of official business, and the Division's report shall
2 not violate the confidentiality provisions of tax laws.

3 (2) Have such access to persons, records, papers, reports, vouchers,
4 correspondence, books, and any other documentation that is in the
5 possession of any individual, private corporation, institution, association,
6 board, or other organization that pertain to the following:

7 a. Amounts received pursuant to a grant or contract from the federal
8 government, the State, or its political subdivisions.

9 b. Amounts received, disbursed, or otherwise handled on behalf of the
10 federal government or the State. In order to determine that payments
11 to providers of social and medical services are legal and proper, the
12 providers of such services will give the Retirement Systems Division,
13 or Retirement Systems Division's authorized representatives, access
14 to the records of recipients who receive such services.

15 (3) Have the authority, and shall be provided with ready access, to examine and
16 inspect all property, equipment, and facilities in the possession of any
17 employer agency or any individual, private corporation, institution,
18 association, board, or other organization that were furnished or otherwise
19 provided through grant, contract, or any other type of funding by the
20 employer agency.

21 (r) Fraud Investigative Reports and Work Papers. – The Director of the Retirement
22 Systems Division shall maintain for 10 years a complete file of all fraud investigative reports
23 and reports of other examinations, investigations, surveys, and reviews issued under the
24 Director's authority. Fraud investigation work papers and other evidence or related supportive
25 material directly pertaining to the work of the Retirement Systems Division of the Department
26 of State Treasurer shall be retained according to an agreement between the Director of
27 Retirement and State Archives. To promote intergovernmental cooperation and avoid
28 unnecessary duplication of fraud investigative effort, and notwithstanding local unit personnel
29 policies to the contrary, pertinent work papers and other supportive material relating to issued
30 fraud investigation reports may be, at the discretion of the Director of Retirement and unless
31 otherwise prohibited by law, made available for inspection by duly authorized representatives
32 of the State and federal government who desire access to and inspection of such records in
33 connection with some matter officially before them, including criminal investigations. Except
34 as provided in this section, or upon an order issued in Wake County Superior Court upon 10
35 days' notice and hearing finding that access is necessary to a proper administration of justice,
36 fraud investigation work papers and related supportive material shall be kept confidential,
37 including any information developed as a part of the investigation.

38 (s) Fraud Reports May Be Anonymous. – The identity of any person reporting fraud,
39 waste, and abuse to the Retirement Systems Division shall be kept confidential and shall not be
40 maintained as a public record within the meaning of G.S. 132-1."

41 **SECTION 3.(a)** G.S. 135-18.11 reads as rewritten:

42 "**§ 135-18.11. Improper receipt of decedent's retirement allowance.**~~allowance or disability~~
43 **benefit.**

44 A person is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor if the person, with the intent to defraud,
45 receives money as a result of cashing, depositing, or receiving a direct deposit of a decedent's
46 retirement allowance or a decedent's monthly benefit under the Disability Income Plan of North
47 Carolina and the person (i) knows that he or she is not entitled to the decedent's retirement
48 ~~allowance,~~ allowance or the monthly disability benefit, (ii) receives the benefit at least two
49 months after the date of the retiree's death, and (iii) does not attempt to inform this Retirement
50 System of the retiree's death."

51 **SECTION 3.(b)** G.S. 135-111 reads as rewritten:

1 **"§ 135-111. Applicability of other pension laws.**

2 Subject to the provisions of this Article, the provisions of G.S. 135-9, entitled "Exemption
3 from taxes, garnishment, attachment, etc."; G.S. 135-10, entitled "Protection against fraud";
4 G.S. 135-10.1, entitled "Failure to Respond"; G.S. 135-18.11, entitled "Improper receipt of
5 decedent's retirement allowance or disability benefit"; and G.S. 135-17, entitled "Facility of
6 payment" shall be applicable to this Article and to benefits paid pursuant to the provisions of
7 this Article."

8 **SECTION 4.(a)** G.S. 128-28(l) reads as rewritten:

9 "(l) Medical Board. – The Board of Trustees shall designate a Medical Board to be
10 composed of not less than three nor more than five physicians not eligible to participate in the
11 Retirement System. The Board of Trustees may structure appointment requirements and term
12 durations for those medical board members. If required, other physicians may be employed to
13 report on special cases. The Medical Board shall arrange for and pass upon all medical
14 examinations required under the provisions of this Chapter, and shall investigate all essential
15 statements and certificates by or on behalf of a member in connection with an application for
16 disability retirement, and shall report in writing to the Board of Trustees its conclusion and
17 recommendations upon all the matters referred to it."

18 **SECTION 4.(b)** G.S. 135-6(k) reads as rewritten:

19 "(k) Medical Board. – The Board of Trustees shall designate a medical board to be
20 composed of not less than three nor more than five physicians not eligible to participate in the
21 Retirement System. The Board of Trustees may structure appointment requirements and term
22 durations for those medical board members. If required, other physicians may be employed to
23 report on special cases. The medical board shall arrange for and pass upon all medical
24 examinations required under the provisions of this Chapter, and shall investigate all essential
25 statements and certificates by or on behalf of a member in connection with an application for
26 disability retirement, and shall report in writing to the Board of Trustees its conclusion and
27 recommendations upon all the matters referred to it."

28 **SECTION 5.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2012.