

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2017

SESSION LAW 2017-129
HOUSE BILL 183

AN ACT TO MAKE CLARIFYING AND ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES TO THE TEACHERS' AND STATE EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM LAWS AND RELATED STATUTES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1.(a) G.S. 58-86-90 reads as rewritten:

"§ 58-86-90. Exemptions of pensions from attachment; rights nonassignable.

Except for the applications of the provisions of G.S. 110-136, and in connection with a court-ordered equitable distribution under G.S. 50-20, the pensions provided are not subject to attachment, garnishments or judgments against the firefighter or rescue squad worker entitled to them, nor are any rights in the fund or the pensions or benefits assignable. Notwithstanding any provisions to the contrary, any overpayment of benefits or erroneous payments to a member in a State-administered retirement system, the Disability Salary Continuation Plan, or the Disability Income Plan of North Carolina, including any benefits paid to, or State Health Plan premiums or claims paid on behalf of, any member who is later determined to have been ineligible for those benefits or unentitled to those amounts, may be offset against any retirement allowance, return of contributions, or any other right accruing under this Article to the same person, the person's estate, or designated beneficiary."

SECTION 1.(b) G.S. 135-5(n) reads as rewritten:

"(n) No action shall be commenced against the State or the Retirement System by any retired member or beneficiary respecting any deficiency in the payment of benefits more than three years after such deficient payment was made, and no action shall be commenced by the State or the Retirement System against any retired member or former member or beneficiary respecting any overpayment of benefits or contributions more than three years after such overpayment was made. This subsection does not affect the right of the Retirement System to recoup overpaid benefits as provided in G.S. 135-9."

SECTION 1.(c) G.S. 128-27(i) reads as rewritten:

"(i) No action shall be commenced against the State or the Retirement System by any retired member or beneficiary respecting any deficiency in the payment of benefits more than three years after such deficient payment was made, and no action shall be commenced by the State or the Retirement System against any retired member or former member or beneficiary respecting any overpayment of benefits or contributions more than three years after such overpayment was made. This subsection does not affect the right of the Retirement System to recoup overpaid benefits as provided in G.S. 128-31."

SECTION 2.(a) G.S. 135-8(a) reads as rewritten:

"(a) Funds to Which Assets of Retirement System Credited. – All of the assets of the Retirement System shall be credited according to the purpose for which they are held to one of ~~four funds, namely, the annuity savings fund, the annuity reserve fund, the pension accumulation fund, and the pension reserve fund.~~ of two funds, namely, the annuity savings fund and the pension accumulation fund."



SECTION 2.(b) G.S. 135-8(b)(1) reads as rewritten:

"(1) ~~Prior to the first day of July, 1947, each employer shall cause to be deducted from the salary of each member on each and every payroll of such employer for each and every payroll period four per centum (4%) of his actual compensation; and the employer also shall deduct four per centum (4%) of any compensation received by any member for teaching in public schools, or in any of the institutions, agencies or departments of the State, from salaries other than the appropriations from the State of North Carolina. On and after such date the rate so deducted shall be five per centum (5%) of actual compensation except that, with respect to each member who is eligible for coverage under the Social Security Act in accordance with the agreement entered into during 1955 in accordance with the provisions of Article 2 of Chapter 135 of Volume 17 of the General Statutes, as amended, and with respect to members covered under G.S. 135-27, with such coverage retroactive to January 1, 1955, such deduction shall, commencing with the first day of the period of service with respect to which such agreement is effective, be at the rate of three per centum (3%) of the part of his actual compensation not in excess of the amount taxable to him under the Federal Insurance Contributions Act as from time to time in effect plus five per centum (5%) of the part of his earnable compensation not so taxable; provided that in the case of any member so eligible and receiving compensation from two or more employers such deductions may be adjusted under such rules as the Board of Trustees may establish so as to be as nearly equivalent as practicable to the deductions which would have been made had the member received all of such compensation from one employer. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Board of Trustees may in its discretion cause such portion as it may determine of deductions made between January 1, 1955, and December 1, 1955, to be transferred into the contribution fund established under G.S. 135-24; such amounts so transferred shall in that event be deemed to be taxes contributed by employees as required under Article 2, Chapter 135 of Volume 17 of the General Statutes as amended, and shall be in lieu of contributions otherwise payable in the same amount as so required.~~

~~Notwithstanding the foregoing, effective July 1, 1963, with respect to the period of service commencing on July 1, 1963, and ending December 31, 1965, the rates of such deduction shall be four per centum (4%) of the portion of compensation not in excess of forty-eight hundred dollars (\$4,800) and six per centum (6%) of the portion of compensation in excess of forty-eight hundred dollars (\$4,800); and with respect to the period of service commencing January 1, 1966, and ending June 30, 1967, the rate of such deductions shall be four per centum (4%) of the portion of compensation not in excess of fifty-six hundred dollars (\$5,600) and six per centum (6%) of the portion of compensation in excess of fifty-six hundred dollars (\$5,600); and with respect to the period of service commencing July 1, 1967, and ending June 30, 1975, the rate of such deductions shall be five per centum (5%) of the portion of compensation not in excess of fifty-six hundred dollars (\$5,600) and six per centum (6%) of the portion of compensation in excess of fifty-six hundred dollars (\$5,600). Such rates shall apply uniformly to all members of the Retirement System, without regard to their coverage under the Social Security Act.~~

~~Notwithstanding the foregoing, effective July 1, 1975, with~~ With respect to the period of service commencing on July 1, 1975, ~~the rate of such deductions shall be each participating employer shall deduct from the salary of each member on every payroll of the employer for every payroll period,~~ six per centum (6%) of the compensation received by any member. Such rates shall apply uniformly to all members of the Retirement System, without regard to their coverage under the Social Security Act."

SECTION 2.(c) G.S. 128-30(a) reads as rewritten:

"(a) Funds to Which Assets of Retirement System Credited. – All of the assets of the Retirement System shall be credited according to the purpose for which they are held to one of ~~five~~three funds, namely, the annuity savings fund, ~~the annuity reserve fund,~~ the pension accumulation fund, ~~the pension reserve fund~~ and the expense fund."

SECTION 2.(d) G.S. 128-30(b)(1) reads as rewritten:

"(1) ~~Prior to July 1, 1951, each participating employer shall cause to be deducted from the salary of each member of each and every payroll of such employer for each and every payroll period four per centum (4%) of his earnable compensation. On and after such date the rate so deducted shall be five per centum (5%) in the case of a Class A member or a Class C member, and four per centum (4%) in the case of a Class B member; provided, however, that with respect to any member who is covered under the Social Security Act in accordance with the agreement entered into during 1955 in accordance with the provisions of Article 2 of Chapter 135 of Volume 17 of the General Statutes, as amended, such deduction shall, commencing with the first day of the period of service with respect to which such agreement is effective, be at the rate of three per centum (3%) of the part of his actual compensation not in excess of the amount taxable to him under the Federal Insurance Contributions Act as from time to time in effect plus five per centum (5%) of the part of his actual compensation not so taxable; provided that in the case of any member so eligible and receiving compensation from two or more employers such deductions may be adjusted under such rules as the Board of Trustees may establish so as to be as nearly equivalent as practicable to the deductions which would have been made had the member received all of such compensation from one employer. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Board of Trustees may in its discretion cause such portion as it may determine of deductions made between January 1, 1955, and December 1, 1955, to be transferred into the contribution fund established under G.S. 135-24, such amounts so transferred shall in that event be deemed to be taxes contributed by employees as required under Article 2 of Chapter 135 of Volume 17 of the General Statutes, as amended, and shall be in lieu of contributions otherwise payable in the same amount as so required. In determining the amount earned by a member whose compensation is derived partly or wholly from fees, such member shall submit a sworn statement to his employer monthly, or at least quarterly, each year as to the amount of fees received by such member as compensation during the period, and each month, or at least quarterly, such member shall pay to his employer the proper per centum of such compensation received from fees, which shall be considered as deductions by the employer as provided in subdivisions (1) and (2) of this subsection.~~

~~Notwithstanding the foregoing, effective July 1, 1965, with respect to the period of service commencing on July 1, 1965, and ending December 31, 1965, the rates of such deductions shall be four per centum (4%) of the~~

~~portion of compensation not in excess of forty eight hundred dollars (\$4,800) and six per centum (6%) of the portion of compensation in excess of forty eight hundred dollars (\$4,800); and with respect to the period of service commencing January 1, 1966, and ending June 30, 1967, the rate of such deduction shall be four per centum (4%) of the portion of compensation not in excess of fifty six hundred dollars (\$5,600) and six per centum (6%) of the portion of compensation in excess of fifty six hundred dollars (\$5,600); and with respect to the period of service commencing July 1, 1967, and ending June 30, 1976, the rate of such deductions shall be five per centum (5%) of the portion of compensation not in excess of five thousand six hundred dollars (\$5,600) and six per centum (6%) of the portion of compensation in excess of five thousand six hundred dollars (\$5,600). Such rates shall apply uniformly to all members of the Retirement System, irrespective of class.~~

Notwithstanding the foregoing, effective July 1, 1976, ~~with~~With respect to compensation paid on and after July 1, 1976, each participating employer shall deduct from the salary of each member on every payroll of the employer for every payroll period, the rate of such deductions shall be six per centum (6%) of the compensation received by any the member. Such rates shall apply uniformly to all members of the Retirement System, irrespective of class."

SECTION 2.(e) G.S. 135-8(b)(4) is repealed.

SECTION 2.(f) G.S. 135-8(c) is repealed.

SECTION 2.(g) G.S. 128-30(c) is repealed.

SECTION 2.(h) G.S. 135-8(d) reads as written:

"(d) Pension Accumulation Fund. – The pension accumulation fund shall be the fund in which shall be accumulated all reserves for the payment of all pensions and other benefits payable from contribution made by employers and from which shall be paid all pensions and other benefits on account of members with prior service credit. Contributions to and payments from the pension accumulation fund shall be made as follows:

(1) On account of each member there shall be paid in the pension accumulation fund by employers an amount equal to a certain percentage of the actual compensation of each member to be known as the "normal contribution," and an additional amount equal to a percentage of ~~his~~the member's actual compensation to be known as the "accrued liability contribution." The rate per centum of such contributions shall be fixed on the basis of the liabilities of the Retirement System as shown by actuarial valuation. ~~Until the first valuation the normal contribution shall be two and fifty seven one hundredths percent (2.57%) for teachers, and one and fifty seven one hundredths percent (1.57%) for State employees, and the accrued liability contribution shall be two and ninety four one hundredths percent (2.94%) for teachers and one and fifty nine one hundredths percent (1.59%) of the salary of other State employees.~~valuation, duly approved by the Board of Trustees, and shall be called the "actuarially determined employer contribution rate."

(2) ~~On the basis of regular interest and of such mortality and other tables as shall be adopted by the Board of Trustees, the actuary engaged by the Board to make each valuation required by this Chapter during the period over which the accrued liability contribution is payable, immediately after making such valuation, shall determine the uniform and constant percentage of the earnable compensation of the average new entrant throughout his entire~~

~~period of active service which would be sufficient to provide for the payment of any pension payable on his account. The rate per centum so determined shall be known as the "normal contribution" rate. After the accrued liability contribution has ceased to be payable, the normal contribution rate shall be the rate per centum of the earnable salary of all members obtained by deducting from the total liabilities of the pension accumulation fund the amount of the funds in hand to the credit of that fund and dividing the remainder by one per centum of the present value of the prospective future salaries of all members as computed on the basis of the mortality and service tables adopted by the Board of Trustees and regular interest. The normal rate of contribution shall be determined by the actuary after each valuation.~~

- (2a) The actuarially determined employer contribution rate shall be calculated annually by the actuary using assumptions and a cost method approved by the Actuarial Standards Board of the American Academy of Actuaries and selected by the Board of Trustees.
- (3) ~~Immediately succeeding the first valuation the actuary engaged by the Board of Trustees shall compute the rate per centum of the total annual compensation of all members which is equivalent to four percent (4%) of the amount of the total pension liability on account of all members and beneficiaries which is not dischargeable by the aforesaid normal contribution made on account of such members during the remainder of their active service. The rate per centum originally so determined shall be known as the "accrued liability contribution" rate. Such rate shall be increased on the basis of subsequent valuations if benefits are increased over those included in the valuation on the basis of which the original accrued liability contribution rate was determined. Upon certification by the actuary engaged by the Board of Trustees that the accrued liability contribution rate may be reduced without impairing the Retirement System, the Board of Trustees may cause the accrued liability contribution rate to be reduced.~~
- (3a) Notwithstanding Chapter 150B of the General Statutes, the total amount payable in each year to the pension accumulation fund shall not be less than the sum of the rate per centum known as the actuarially determined employer contribution rate of the total earned compensation of all members during the preceding year as adjusted higher under a contribution rate policy adopted by the Board of Trustees and known as the "required employer contribution" rate. The Board of Trustees shall not adopt a contribution rate policy that results in a rate less than the normal contribution rate.
- (4) ~~The total amount payable in each year to the pension accumulation fund shall not be less than the sum of the rate per centum known as the normal contribution rate and the accrued liability contribution rate of the total actual compensation of all members during the preceding year: Provided, however, that, subject to the provisions of subdivision (3) of this subsection the amount of each annual accrued liability contribution shall be at least three percent (3%) greater than the preceding annual accrued liability payment, and that the aggregate payment by employers shall be sufficient, when combined with the amount in the fund, to provide the pensions and other benefits payable out of the fund during the year then current.~~
- (5) ~~The accrued liability contribution shall be discontinued as soon as the accumulated reserve in the pension accumulation fund shall equal the present value as actuarially computed and approved by the Board of~~

~~Trustees, of the total liability of such fund less the present value, computed on the basis of the normal contribution rate then in force, of the prospective normal contributions to be received on account of all persons who are at the time members.~~

- (6) ~~All pensions, and benefits in lieu thereof, with the exception of those payable on account of members who received no prior service allowance, thereof payable from contributions of employer shall be paid from the pension accumulation fund.~~
- (7) ~~Upon the retirement of a member not entitled to credit for prior service, an amount equal to his pension reserve shall be transferred from the pension accumulation fund to the pension reserve fund."~~

SECTION 2.(i) G.S. 128-30(d) reads as rewritten:

"(d) Pension Accumulation Fund. – The pension accumulation fund shall be the fund in which shall be accumulated all reserves for the payment of all pensions and other benefits payable from contributions made by employers and from which shall be paid all pensions and other benefits on account of members with prior service credit. Contributions to and payments from the pension accumulation fund shall be made as follows:

- (1) Each participating employer shall pay to the pension accumulation fund monthly, or at such other intervals as may be agreed upon with the Board of Trustees, an amount equal to a certain percentage of the actual compensation of each member, to be known as the "normal contribution" and an additional amount equal to a percentage of ~~his~~the member's actual compensation to be known as the "accrued liability contribution." The rate per centum of such contributions shall be fixed on the basis of the liabilities of the Retirement System as shown by actuarial valuation. ~~Until the first valuation for any employer whose participation commenced prior to July 1, 1951, the normal contribution shall be three percent (3%) for general employees and five percent (5%) for firemen and policemen, and the accrued liability contribution shall be three percent (3%) for general employees and six percent (6%) for firemen and policemen. Until the first valuation for any employer whose participation commenced on or after July 1, 1951, the normal contribution shall be four percent (4%) for general employees and six and two thirds percent (6 2/3%) for firemen and policemen, and the accrued liability contribution shall be four percent (4%) for general employees and eight percent (8%) for firemen and policemen.~~valuation and duly approved by the Board of Trustees, which shall be called the "actuarially determined employer contribution rate."
- (2) ~~On the basis of regular interest and of such mortality and other tables as shall be adopted by the Board of Trustees, the actuary engaged by the Board to make each valuation required by this Article during the period over which the accrued liability contribution is payable, immediately after making such valuation, shall determine the uniform and constant percentage of the actual compensation of the average new entrant throughout his entire period of active service which would be sufficient to provide for the payment of any pension payable on his account and for the pro rata share of the cost of administration of the Retirement System. The rate per centum so determined shall be known as the "normal contribution" rate. After the accrued liability contribution has ceased to be payable, the normal contribution rate shall be the rate per centum of the earnable salary of all members obtained by deducting from the total liabilities of the pension accumulation fund the amount of the funds in hand to the credit of that fund and dividing the~~

~~remainder by one per centum (1%) of the present value of the prospective future salaries of all members as computed on the basis of the mortality and service tables adopted by the Board of Trustees and regular interest. The normal rate of contribution shall be determined by the actuary after each valuation. A normal contribution rate shall be determined separately for general employees as a group and for law enforcement officers as a group, these rates to be applied to the respective group payrolls of each employer in determining the normal contribution required of each employer.~~

- (2a) The actuarially determined employer contribution rate shall be calculated annually by the actuary using assumptions and a cost method approved by the Actuarial Standards Board of the American Academy of Actuaries and selected by the Board of Trustees.
- (3) The "~~accrued~~past service liability contribution" shall be set for each employer on the basis of the prior service credits allowable to the employees thereof, who are entitled to prior service certificates, and shall be paid for a period of approximately 30 years, provided that the length of the period of payment for each employer after contributions begin shall be determined by the Board of Trustees as the result of actuarial valuations.
- (4) ~~At the end of the first year following~~Upon the date of participation for each employer, the ~~accrued~~past service liability payable by such employer shall be set, by deducting from the present value of the total liability for all pensions payable on account of all members and pensioners of the System who became participants through service for such employer, the present value of the future normal contributions payable, and the amount of any assets resulting from any contributions previously made by such employer. ~~Then the "accrued liability contribution" rate for such employer shall be the per centum of the total annual compensation of all members employed by such employer which is equivalent to four per centum (4%) of the amount of such accrued liability. The expense of making such actuarial valuation to determine the accrued liability contribution for each employer shall be paid by such employer. The accrued liability contribution rate shall be increased on the basis of subsequent valuation if benefits are increased over those included in the valuations on the basis of which the original accrued liability contribution rate was determined.~~ Then the "past service liability contribution rate" for such employer shall be the per centum of the total annual compensation of all members employed by the employer which is estimated to extinguish the liability in 24 years.
- (5) ~~The~~Notwithstanding Chapter 150B of the General Statutes, the total amount payable in each year to the pension accumulation fund shall not be less than the sum of the rate per centum known as the normal~~actuarially determined employer contribution rate and the accrued~~past service liability contribution rate of the total earned compensation of all members during the preceding year: Provided, however, that the amount of each annual accrued liability contribution shall be at least three per centum (3%) greater than the preceding annual accrued liability payment, and that the aggregate payment by employers shall be sufficient, when combined with the amount in the fund, to provide the pensions and other benefits payable out of the fund during the year then current-year as adjusted under a contribution rate policy adopted by the Board of Trustees and known as the "required employer contribution rate." The Board of Trustees shall not adopt a contribution rate policy that results in a rate less than the normal contribution rate.

- (6) ~~The accrued liability contribution shall be discontinued as soon as the accumulated reserve in the pension accumulation fund shall equal the present value, as actuarially computed and approved by the Board of Trustees, of the total liability of such fund less the present value, computed on the basis of the normal contribution rate then in force, of the prospective normal contributions to be received on account of all persons who are at that time members, as separately determined for general employees and law enforcement officers.~~
- (7) All pensions, and benefits in lieu thereof, with the exception of those payable on account of members who received no prior service allowance, payable from contributions of employers, shall be paid from the pension accumulation fund.
- (8) ~~Upon the retirement of a member not entitled to credit for prior service, an amount equal to his pension reserve shall be transferred from the pension accumulation fund to the pension reserve fund.~~
- (9) Notwithstanding Chapter 150B of the General Statutes and the foregoing provisions of this subsection, beginning with the December 31, 1985 valuation, subsection, the actuary shall determine an additional "accrued liability contribution" contribution rate" and a "normal contribution rate" on account of the total earned compensation of each employer's law enforcement officers-officers each year, known as the "required employer contribution for law enforcement officers rate." The required employer contribution for law enforcement officers rate may be adjusted under a contribution rate policy adopted by the Board of Trustees and added to the employers' past service liability rate. The Board of Trustees shall not adopt a contribution rate policy that results in a rate less than the normal contribution rate. This contribution shall be that percentage of law enforcement officer compensation necessary to liquidate the "existing unfunded accrued liability" over a period of years to be determined by the Board of Trustees. The "existing unfunded accrued liability" for each employer shall be equal to the sum of two liabilities. The first is that portion of the unfunded accrued liability of the Law Enforcement Officers' Retirement System as of December 31, 1985, attributable to the accrued liability for each employer's law enforcement officers participating in that System, all based on actuarial assumptions and methods applicable to that System. The second is the accrued liability for additional benefits payable to each employer's law enforcement officers who are members of this Retirement System on December 31, 1985. The "accrued liability contribution" determined on the basis of this paragraph shall be added to that determined under subdivision (3) and shall be included in the total amount payable under subdivision (5)."

SECTION 2.(j) G.S. 135-8(e) is repealed.

SECTION 2.(k) G.S. 128-30(e) is repealed.

SECTION 2.(l) G.S. 135-8(f)(2)b. is repealed.

SECTION 2.(m) G.S. 135-8(f)(2)e. reads as rewritten:

"e. Each employer shall transmit monthly to the State Retirement System on account of each employee, who is a member of this System, an amount sufficient to cover ~~the normal contribution and the accrued liability~~required employer contribution of each member employed by such employer for the preceding month."

SECTION 2.(n) G.S. 135-7(f) reads as rewritten:

"(f) Retiree Health Benefit Fund. – It is the intent of the General Assembly that the Retiree Health Benefit Fund be a trust that provides an irrevocable source of funding to be used, to the extent the Fund's assets are sufficient, only for health benefits to retired and disabled employees and their applicable beneficiaries. Accordingly, the following provisions apply to the Retiree Health Benefit Fund:

- (1) For the purposes of this subsection, the term "eligible Plan members" means eligible retired and disabled employees, and their applicable beneficiaries, who are members of the North Carolina State Health Plan for Teachers and State Employees as provided by this Chapter.
- (2) The Retiree Health Benefit Fund is established as a trust fund in which accumulated contributions ~~from employers~~ and any earnings on those contributions shall be used only to provide health benefits to retired and disabled employees and their applicable beneficiaries as provided by this Chapter. eligible Plan members, after payment of any accrued reasonable investment and administrative expenses. The Retiree Health Benefit Fund shall be administered in accordance with the provisions of subsection (a) of this section.
- (3) Employer and non-employer contributions to the Fund and earnings on those contributions are irrevocable. The assets of the Fund are dedicated to providing health benefits to ~~retired and disabled employees and their applicable beneficiaries as provided by this Chapter.~~ eligible Plan members in accordance with the Plan's benefit terms, as those terms may from time to time be amended. ~~and~~ The assets of the Fund are not subject to the claims of creditors of the employers and non-employers making contributions to the Fund. Fund, are not subject to the claims of any creditors of the Fund's trustees and administrators, and are not subject to the claims of creditors of eligible Plan members.
- (4) However, Fund assets may be used for reasonable expenses to administer benefits provided by the Fund, as approved by the Board of Trustees, including offsets to the State budget to the Retirement Systems Division for staff administration of benefits and costs to conduct required actuarial valuations of State-supported retired employees' health benefits under other post-employment benefit accounting standards set forth by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board of the Financial Accounting Foundation."

SECTION 2.(o) G.S. 135-110(a) reads as rewritten:

"(a) It is the intent of the General Assembly that a trust fund be created that provides an irrevocable source of funding to be used, to the extent the fund's assets are sufficient, only for disability benefits to participants and beneficiaries. Accordingly, the following provisions apply to that trust fund:

- (1) A trust fund, the Disability Income Plan of North Carolina Trust Fund, is hereby created to which all receipts, transfers, appropriations, contributions, investment earnings and other income belonging to the Plan shall be deposited, and from which all ~~benefits, expenses, and other charges~~ benefits and expenses against the Plan shall be disbursed. The Board of Trustees shall be the trustee of the ~~funds created by this Article.~~ Fund.
- (2) Employer and non-employer contributions to the Disability Income Plan of North Carolina Trust Fund and earnings on those contributions are irrevocable. The assets of the Fund are dedicated to providing benefits to participants and beneficiaries in accordance with the Plan's benefit terms. The assets of the Fund are not subject to the claims of creditors of the

employers and non-employers making contributions to the Fund, are not subject to the claims of any creditors of the Fund's trustees and administrators, and are not subject to the claims of participants and beneficiaries.

- (3) Disability Income Plan of North Carolina Trust Fund assets may be used for reasonable expenses to administer benefits provided by the Fund as approved by the Board of Trustees."

SECTION 2.(p) G.S. 135-7 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

"(g) It is the intent of the General Assembly that a master trust fund be created that provides an irrevocable source of funding to be used, to the extent the fund's assets are sufficient, only for death benefits and disability benefits to the Plans' members, participants, and beneficiaries, pursuant to G.S. 120-4.27, G.S. 128-27(l), subsections (l2) through (l6) of G.S. 128-27, 135-5(l), 135-64(k), and 143-166.60. Accordingly, the following provisions apply to the Trust:

- (1) The following definitions apply in this subsection:

- a. Beneficiaries. – Any person in receipt of, or eligible to receive, a benefit payable from the North Carolina Teachers' and State Employees' Benefit Trust pursuant to G.S. 120-4.27, subsections (l2) through (l6) of G.S. 128-27, 135-5(l), 135-64(k), and 143-166.60.
- b. Plans. – The retiree group death benefit trust established under G.S. 120-4.27, the Group Life Insurance Plan established under G.S. 128-27(l), the retiree group death benefit trust fund established under subsections (l2) through (l6) of G.S. 128-27, the Group Life Insurance Plan established under G.S. 135-5(l), the retiree group death benefit trust fund established under G.S. 135-5(l), the retiree group death benefit trust fund established under G.S.135-64(k), and the Separate Insurance Benefits Plan established by G.S. 143-166.60.

- (2) A trust fund, the North Carolina Teachers' and State Employees' Benefit Trust, is hereby created as a master trust to which all receipts, transfers, appropriations, contributions, investment earnings, and other income belonging to the Plans shall be deposited, and from which all benefits and expenses against the Plans shall be disbursed. The Boards of Trustees of the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System and the Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System shall be the trustee of the Trust. Within the Benefit Trust, the funds of the Plans shall be accounted for separately and not commingled. Assets of one plan cannot be used to pay for liabilities of another plan within the Trust.

- (3) Employer and non-employer contributions to the North Carolina Teachers' and State Employees' Benefit Trust and earnings on those contributions are irrevocable. The assets of the Trust are dedicated to providing benefits to members, participants, and beneficiaries in accordance with the Plans' benefit terms. The assets of the Trust are not subject to the claims of creditors of the employers and non-employers making contributions to the Trust, are not subject to the claims of any creditors of the Trust, trustees, and administrators, and are not subject to the claims of creditors of members, participants, and beneficiaries."

SECTION 2.(q) G.S. 120-4.27 reads as rewritten:

"§ 120-4.27. **Death benefit.**

...

Upon receipt of proof, satisfactory to the Board of Trustees, of the death of a retired member of the Retirement System or Retirement Fund on or after January 1, 2015, there shall

be paid a death benefit to the person or persons designated by the member or, if the member has not designated a beneficiary, to the surviving spouse of the deceased retired member or, if not survived by a designated beneficiary or spouse, to the deceased retired member's legal representative; provided the retired member has elected, when first eligible, to make, and has continuously made, in advance of ~~his~~the member's death required contributions as determined by the Retirement System on a fully contributory basis, through retirement allowance deductions or other methods adopted by the Retirement System, to a group death benefit trust ~~fund~~fund, the North Carolina Teachers' and State Employees' Benefit Trust, administered by the Board of Trustees separate and apart from the Retirement System's Annuity Savings Fund and Pension Accumulation Fund. Employer and non-employer contributions to the Benefit Trust and earnings on those contributions are irrevocable. The assets of the Benefit Trust are dedicated to providing benefits to members and beneficiaries in accordance with the Plan's benefit terms. The assets of the Benefit Trust are not subject to the claims of creditors of the employees and non-employees making contributions to the Benefit Trust, are not subject to the claims of any creditors of the Benefit Trust's trustees and administrators, and are not subject to the claims of creditors of members and beneficiaries. Benefit Trust assets may be used for reasonable expenses to administer benefits provided by the Fund as approved by the Board of Trustees.

~~This~~The death benefit payable under this subsection shall be a lump-sum payment in the amount of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) upon the completion of 24 months of contributions required under this subsection. Should death occur before the completion of 24 months of contributions required under this subsection, the deceased retired member's designated beneficiary or beneficiaries, or surviving spouse if not survived by a designated beneficiary, or legal representative if not survived by a designated beneficiary or spouse, shall be paid the sum of the retired member's contributions required by this subsection plus interest to be determined by the Board of Trustees."

SECTION 2.(r) G.S. 128-27(l) reads as rewritten:

"(l) Death Benefit Plan. – The provisions of this subsection shall become effective for any employer only after an agreement to that effect has been executed by the employer and the Director of the Retirement System. There is hereby created a Group Life Insurance Plan (hereinafter called the "Plan") which is established as an employee welfare benefit plan that is separate and apart from the Retirement System and under which the members of the Retirement System shall participate and be eligible for group life insurance benefits. The Plan shall be part of the North Carolina Teachers' and State Employees' Benefit Trust, as established under G.S. 135-7(g). All receipts, transfers, appropriations, contributions, investment earnings, and other income belonging to the Plan shall be deposited in the Benefit Trust. All benefits and expenses against the Plan shall be disbursed from the Benefit Trust. Employer and non-employer contributions to the Benefit Trust and earnings on those contributions are irrevocable. The assets of the Benefit Trust are dedicated to providing benefits to members and beneficiaries in accordance with the Plan's benefit terms. The assets of the Benefit Trust are not subject to the claims of creditors of the employees and non-employees making contributions to the Benefit Trust, are not subject to the claims of any creditors of the Benefit Trust's trustees and administrators, and are not subject to the claims of creditors of members and beneficiaries. Benefit Trust assets may be used for reasonable expenses to administer benefits provided by the Fund as approved by the Board of Trustees.

Upon receipt of proof, satisfactory to the Board of Trustees in their capacity as trustees under the Group Life Insurance Plan, of the death, in service, of a member who had completed at least one full calendar year of membership in the Retirement System, there shall be paid to such person as ~~he~~the member shall have nominated by electronic submission prior to completing 10 years of service in a form approved by the Board of Trustees or by written designation duly acknowledged and filed with the Board of Trustees, if such person is living at

the time of the member's death, otherwise to the member's legal representatives, a death benefit. Such death benefit shall be equal to the greater of:

...."

SECTION 2.(s) G.S. 128-27(16) reads as rewritten:

"(16) Upon receipt of proof, satisfactory to the Board of Trustees in its capacity under this subsection, of the death of a retired member of the Retirement System on or after January 1, 2015, there shall be paid a death benefit to the person or persons designated by the member or, if the member has not designated a beneficiary, to the surviving spouse of the deceased retired member or, if not survived by a designated beneficiary or spouse, to the deceased retired member's legal representative; provided the retired member has elected, when first eligible, to make, and has continuously made, in advance of ~~his~~the member's death required contributions as determined by the Board of Trustees on a fully contributory basis, through retirement allowance deductions or other methods adopted by the Board of Trustees, to a group death benefit trust ~~fund~~fund, the North Carolina Teachers' and State Employees' Benefit Trust, administered by the Board of Trustees separate and apart from the Retirement System's Annuity Savings Fund and Pension Accumulation Fund. Employer and non-employer contributions to the Benefit Trust and earnings on those contributions are irrevocable. The assets of the Benefit Trust are dedicated to providing benefits to members and beneficiaries in accordance with the Plan's benefit terms. The assets of the Benefit Trust are not subject to the claims of creditors of the employees and non-employees making contributions to the Benefit Trust, are not subject to the claims of any creditors of the Benefit Trust's trustees and administrators, and are not subject to the claims of creditors of members and beneficiaries. Benefit Trust assets may be used for reasonable expenses to administer benefits provided by the Fund as approved by the Board of Trustees.

~~This~~The death benefit payable under this subsection shall be a lump-sum payment in the amount of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) upon the completion of 24 months of contributions required under this subsection. Should death occur before the completion of 24 months of contributions required under this subsection, the deceased retired member's designated beneficiary or beneficiaries, or surviving spouse if not survived by a designated beneficiary, or legal representative if not survived by a designated beneficiary or spouse, shall be paid the sum of the retired member's contributions required by this subsection plus interest to be determined by the Board of Trustees."

SECTION 2.(t) G.S. 135-5(1) reads as rewritten:

"(1) Death Benefit Plan. – There is hereby created a Group Life Insurance Plan (hereinafter called the "Plan") which is established as an employee welfare benefit plan that is separate and apart from the Retirement System and under which the members of the Retirement System shall participate and be eligible for group life insurance benefits. The Plan shall be part of the North Carolina Teachers' and State Employees' Benefit Trust, as established under G.S. 135-7(g). All receipts, transfers, appropriations, contributions, investment earnings, and other income belonging to the Plan shall be deposited in the Benefit Trust. All benefits and expenses against the Plan shall be disbursed from the Benefit Trust. Employer and non-employer contributions to the Benefit Trust and earnings on those contributions are irrevocable. The assets of the Benefit Trust are dedicated to providing benefits to participants, surviving spouses, and the members' estates in accordance with the Plan's benefit terms. The assets of the Benefit Trust are not subject to the claims of creditors of the employees and non-employees making contributions to the Benefit Trust, are not subject to the claims of any creditors of the Benefit Trust's trustees and administrators, and are not subject to the claims of creditors of members and beneficiaries. Benefit Trust assets may be used for reasonable expenses to administer benefits provided by the Fund as approved by the Board of Trustees.

Upon receipt of proof, satisfactory to the Board of Trustees in their capacity as trustees under the Group Life Insurance Plan, of the death, in service, of a member who had completed

at least one full calendar year of membership in the Retirement System, there shall be paid to such person as ~~h~~the member shall have nominated by electronic submission prior to completing 10 years of service in a form approved by the Board of Trustees or by written designation duly acknowledged and filed with the Board of Trustees, if such person is living at the time of the member's death, otherwise to the member's legal representatives, a death benefit. Such death benefit shall be equal to the greater of:

...

Upon receipt of proof, satisfactory to the Board of Trustees in its capacity under this subsection, of the death of a retired member of the Retirement System on or after January 1, 2015, there shall be paid a death benefit to the person or persons designated by the member or, if the member has not designated a beneficiary, to the surviving spouse of the deceased retired member or, if not survived by a designated beneficiary or spouse, to the deceased retired member's legal representative; provided the retired member has elected, when first eligible, to make, and has continuously made, in advance of ~~h~~the member's death required contributions as determined by the Board of Trustees on a fully contributory basis, through retirement allowance deductions or other methods adopted by the Board of Trustees, to a group death benefit trust ~~fund~~fund, the North Carolina Teachers' and State Employees' Benefit Trust, administered by the Board of Trustees Fund and Pension Accumulation Fund. Employer and non-employer contributions to the Benefit Trust and earnings on those contributions are irrevocable. The assets of the Benefit Trust are dedicated to providing benefits to participants, surviving spouses, and the members' estates in accordance with the Plan's benefit terms. The assets of the Benefit Trust are not subject to the claims of creditors of the employees and non-employees making contributions to the Benefit Trust, are not subject to the claims of any creditors of the Benefit Trust's trustees and administrators, and are not subject to the claims of creditors of members and beneficiaries. Benefit Trust assets may be used for reasonable expenses to administer benefits provided by the Fund as approved by the Board of Trustees. This death benefit shall be a lump-sum payment in the amount of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) upon the completion of 24 months of contributions required under this subsection. Should death occur before the completion of 24 months of contributions required under this subsection, the deceased retired member's designated beneficiary or beneficiaries, or surviving spouse if there is no surviving beneficiary, or legal representative if not survived by a designated beneficiary or spouse, shall be paid the sum of the retired member's contributions required by this subsection plus interest to be determined by the Board of Trustees."

SECTION 2.(u) G.S. 135-64(k) reads as rewritten:

"(k) Upon the death of a retired member on or after January 1, 2015, there shall be paid a death benefit to the person or persons designated by the member or, if the member has not designated a beneficiary, to the surviving spouse of the deceased retired member or, if not survived by a designated beneficiary or spouse, to the deceased retired member's legal representative; provided the retired member has elected, when first eligible, to make, and has continuously made, in advance of ~~h~~the member's death required contributions as determined by the Board of Trustees on a fully contributory basis, through retirement allowance deductions or other methods adopted by the Board of Trustees, to a group death benefit trust ~~fund~~fund, the North Carolina Teachers' and State Employees' Benefit Trust, administered by the Board of Trustees separate and apart from the Retirement System's Annuity Savings Fund and Pension Accumulation Fund. Employer and non-employer contributions to the Benefit Trust and earnings on those contributions are irrevocable. The assets of the Benefit Trust are dedicated to providing benefits to members and beneficiaries in accordance with the Plan's benefit terms. The assets of the Benefit Trust are not subject to the claims of creditors of the employees and non-employees making contributions to the Benefit Trust, are not subject to the claims of any creditors of the Benefit Trust's trustees and administrators, and are not subject to the claims of

creditors of members and beneficiaries. Benefit Trust assets may be used for reasonable expenses to administer benefits provided by the Fund as approved by the Board of Trustees.

~~This~~The death benefit payable under this subsection shall be a lump-sum payment in the amount of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) upon the completion of 24 months of contributions required under this subsection. Should death occur before the completion of 24 months of contributions required under this subsection, the deceased retired member's designated beneficiary or beneficiaries, or surviving spouse if there is no surviving designated beneficiary, or legal representative if not survived by a designated beneficiary or spouse, shall be paid the sum of the retired member's contributions required by this subsection plus interest to be determined by the Board of Trustees."

SECTION 2.(v) G.S. 143-166.60(b) reads as rewritten:

"(b) The Boards of Trustees of the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System and the Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System shall jointly administer the Plan and shall, under the terms and conditions otherwise appearing in this Article, provide Plan benefits either (i) by establishing a separate trust fund in conformance with Section 501(c)(9) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 as amended or, (ii) by causing the Plan to affiliate with a master ~~trust~~trust, the North Carolina Teachers' and State Employees' Benefits Trust, providing the same benefits for participants. Employer and non-employer contributions to the Benefit Trust and earnings on those contributions are irrevocable. The assets of the Benefit Trust are dedicated to providing benefits to participants, surviving spouses, participants' estates, and persons named by the participant to receive the benefit. The assets of the Benefit Trust are not subject to the claims of creditors of the employees and non-employees making contributions to the Benefit Trust, are not subject to the claims of any creditors of the Benefit Trust's trustees and administrators, and are not subject to the claims of creditors of participants. Benefit Trust assets may be used for reasonable expenses to administer benefits provided by the Fund as approved by the Board of Trustees."

SECTION 2.(w) This section becomes effective June 30, 2017.

SECTION 3.(a) G.S. 135-5(f) reads as rewritten:

"(f) Return of Accumulated Contributions. – Should a member cease to be a teacher or State employee except by death or retirement under the provisions of this Chapter, ~~h~~the member shall upon submission of an application be paid, not earlier than 60 days from the date of termination of service, h~~is~~the member's contributions, and the accumulated regular interest thereon, provided that ~~h~~the member has not in the meantime returned to service. Upon payment of such sum his or her membership in the System shall cease and, if he or she thereafter again becomes a member, no credit shall be allowed for any service previously rendered except as provided in G.S. 135-4, and such payment shall be in full and complete discharge of any rights in or to any benefits otherwise payable hereunder. Upon receipt of proof satisfactory to the Board of Trustees of the death, prior to retirement, of a member or former member there shall be paid to such person or persons as ~~h~~the member or former member shall have nominated by electronic submission ~~prior to completing 10 years of service~~ in a form approved by the Board of Trustees or by written designation duly acknowledged and filed with the Board of Trustees, if such person or persons are living at the time of the member's death, otherwise to the member's legal representatives, the amount of ~~h~~the member's accumulated contributions at the time of ~~h~~the member's death, unless the beneficiary elects to receive the alternate benefit under the provisions of (m) below. An extension service employee who made contributions to the Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System and the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System as a result of dual employment may not be paid his or her accumulated contributions unless ~~h~~the extension service employee is eligible to be paid his or her accumulated contributions in both systems for the same period of service.

Pursuant to the provisions of G.S. 135-56.2, a member who is also a member of the Consolidated Judicial Retirement System may irrevocably elect to transfer any accumulated

contributions to the Consolidated Judicial Retirement System or to the Supplemental Retirement Income Plan and forfeit any rights in or to any benefits otherwise payable hereunder.

A member who is a participant or beneficiary of the Disability Income Plan of North Carolina as is provided in Article 6 of this Chapter shall not be paid a return of accumulated contributions, notwithstanding the member's status as an employee or teacher. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, a member who is a beneficiary of the Disability Income Plan of North Carolina as provided in Article 6 of this Chapter and who is receiving disability benefits under the transition provisions as provided in G.S. 135-112, shall not be prohibited from receiving a return of accumulated contributions as provided in this subsection."

SECTION 3.(b) G.S. 135-5(l), as amended by Section 2(t) of this act, reads as rewritten:

"(l) Death Benefit Plan. – There is hereby created a Group Life Insurance Plan (hereinafter called the "Plan") which is established as an employee welfare benefit plan that is separate and apart from the Retirement System and under which the members of the Retirement System shall participate and be eligible for group life insurance benefits. The Plan shall be part of the North Carolina Teachers' and State Employees' Benefit Trust, as established under G.S. 135-7(g). All receipts, transfers, appropriations, contributions, investment earnings, and other income belonging to the Plan shall be deposited in the Benefit Trust. All benefits and expenses against the Plan shall be disbursed from the Benefit Trust. Employer and non-employer contributions to the Benefit Trust and earnings on those contributions are irrevocable. The assets of the Benefit Trust are dedicated to providing benefits to participants, surviving spouses, and the members' estates in accordance with the Plan's benefit terms. The assets of the Benefit Trust are not subject to the claims of creditors of the employees and non-employees making contributions to the Benefit Trust, are not subject to the claims of any creditors of the Benefit Trust's trustees and administrators, and are not subject to the claims of creditors of members and beneficiaries. Benefit Trust assets may be used for reasonable expenses to administer benefits provided by the Fund as approved by the Board of Trustees.

Upon receipt of proof, satisfactory to the Board of Trustees in their capacity as trustees under the Group Life Insurance Plan, of the death, in service, of a member who had completed at least one full calendar year of membership in the Retirement System, there shall be paid to such person as the member shall have nominated by electronic submission ~~prior to completing 10 years of service~~ in a form approved by the Board of Trustees or by written designation duly acknowledged and filed with the Board of Trustees, if such person is living at the time of the member's death, otherwise to the member's legal representatives, a death benefit. Such death benefit shall be equal to the greater of:

...."

SECTION 3.(c) G.S. 135-63 reads as rewritten:

"§ 135-63. Benefits on death before retirement.

(a) Upon receipt of proof, satisfactory to the Board of Trustees, of the death of a member in service, there shall be paid in a lump sum to such person as the member shall have nominated by electronic submission ~~prior to completing 10 years of service~~ in a form approved by the Board of Trustees or by written designation duly acknowledged and filed with the Board of Trustees, if such person is living at the time of the member's death, otherwise to the member's legal representatives, a death benefit equal to the sum of (i) the member's accumulated contributions, plus (ii) the member's final compensation; provided, however, that if the member has attained his or her fiftieth birthday with at least five years of membership service at ~~his~~the member's date of death, and if the designated recipient of the death benefits is the member's spouse who survives ~~him, him or her,~~ and if the spouse so elects, then the lump-sum death benefit provided for herein shall consist only of a payment equal to the member's final compensation and there shall be paid to the surviving spouse an annual

retirement allowance, payable monthly, which shall commence on the first day of the calendar month coinciding with or next following the death of the member and shall be continued on the first day of each month thereafter until the remarriage or death of the spouse. The amount of any such retirement allowance shall be equal to one half of the amount of the retirement allowance to which the member would have been entitled had ~~he~~the member retired under the provisions of G.S. 135-57(a) on the first day of the calendar month coinciding with or next following ~~his~~the member's date of death, reduced by two percent (2%) thereof for each full year, if any, by which the age of the member at his or her date of death exceeds that of ~~his~~the member's spouse. If the retirement allowance to the spouse shall terminate on the remarriage or death of the spouse before the total of the retirement allowance payments made equals the amount of the member's accumulated contributions at date of death, the excess of such accumulated contributions over the total of the retirement allowances paid to the spouse shall be paid in a lump sum to such person as the member shall have nominated by electronic submission in a form approved by the Board of Trustees or by written designation duly acknowledged and filed with the Board of Trustees, if such person is living at the time such payment falls due, otherwise to the former member's legal representatives.

...

(c) Upon receipt of proof, satisfactory to the Board of Trustees, of the death of a member not in service, there shall be paid in a lump sum to such person as the member shall have nominated by electronic submission ~~prior to completing 10 years of service~~ in a form approved by the Board of Trustees or by written designation duly acknowledged and filed with the Board of Trustees, if such person is living at the time of the member's death, otherwise to the member's legal representatives, a death benefit equal to the member's accumulated contributions.

...."

SECTION 3.(d) G.S. 128-27(f) reads as rewritten:

"(f) Return of Accumulated Contributions. – Should a member cease to be an employee except by death or retirement under the provisions of this Chapter, ~~he~~the member shall upon submission of an application be paid, not earlier than 60 days from the date of termination of service, ~~his~~the member's contributions and the accumulated regular interest thereon, provided that ~~he~~the member has not in the meantime returned to service. Upon payment of such sum his or her membership in the System shall cease and, if he or she thereafter again becomes a member, no credit shall be allowed for any service previously rendered except as provided in G.S. 128-26; and such payment shall be in full and complete discharge of any rights in or to any benefits otherwise payable hereunder. Upon receipt of proof satisfactory to the Board of Trustees of the death, prior to retirement, of a member or former member there shall be paid to such person or persons as ~~he~~the member or former member shall have nominated by electronic submission ~~prior to completing 10 years of service~~ in a form approved by the Board of Trustees or by written designation duly acknowledged and filed with the Board of Trustees, if such person or persons are living at the time of the member's death, otherwise to the member's legal representatives, the amount of ~~his~~the member's accumulated contributions at the time of ~~his~~the member's death, unless the beneficiary elects to receive the alternate benefit under the provisions of (m) below. An extension service employee who made contributions to the Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System and the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System as a result of dual employment may not be paid his or her accumulated contributions unless ~~he~~the extension service employee is eligible to be paid his or her accumulated contributions in both systems for the same period of service.

Pursuant to the provisions of G.S. 135-56.2, a member who is also a member of the Consolidated Judicial Retirement System may irrevocably elect to transfer any accumulated contributions to the Consolidated Judicial Retirement System or to the Supplemental

Retirement Income Plan and forfeit any rights in or to any benefits otherwise payable hereunder."

SECTION 3.(e) G.S. 128-27(l), as amended by Section 2(r) of this act, reads as rewritten:

"(l) **Death Benefit Plan.** – The provisions of this subsection shall become effective for any employer only after an agreement to that effect has been executed by the employer and the Director of the Retirement System. There is hereby created a Group Life Insurance Plan (hereinafter called the "Plan") which is established as an employee welfare benefit plan that is separate and apart from the Retirement System and under which the members of the Retirement System shall participate and be eligible for group life insurance benefits. The Plan shall be part of the North Carolina Teachers' and State Employees' Benefit Trust, as established under G.S. 135-7(g). All receipts, transfers, appropriations, contributions, investment earnings, and other income belonging to the Plan shall be deposited in the Benefit Trust. All benefits and expenses against the Plan shall be disbursed from the Benefit Trust. Employer and non-employer contributions to the Benefit Trust and earnings on those contributions are irrevocable. The assets of the Benefit Trust are dedicated to providing benefits to members and beneficiaries in accordance with the Plan's benefit terms. The assets of the Benefit Trust are not subject to the claims of creditors of the employees and non-employees making contributions to the Benefit Trust, are not subject to the claims of any creditors of the Benefit Trust's trustees and administrators, and are not subject to the claims of creditors of members and beneficiaries. Benefit Trust assets may be used for reasonable expenses to administer benefits provided by the Fund as approved by the Board of Trustees.

Upon receipt of proof, satisfactory to the Board of Trustees in their capacity as trustees under the Group Life Insurance Plan, of the death, in service, of a member who had completed at least one full calendar year of membership in the Retirement System, there shall be paid to such person as the member shall have nominated by electronic submission ~~prior to completing 10 years of service~~ in a form approved by the Board of Trustees or by written designation duly acknowledged and filed with the Board of Trustees, if such person is living at the time of the member's death, otherwise to the member's legal representatives, a death benefit. Such death benefit shall be equal to the greater of:

...."

SECTION 3.(f) G.S. 120-4.25 reads as rewritten:

"§ 120-4.25. Return of accumulated contributions.

If a member ceases to be a member of the General Assembly except by death or retirement, ~~hethe member~~ shall, upon submission of an application, be paid not earlier than 60 days following the date of termination of service the sum of ~~histhe member's~~ accumulated contributions provided ~~hethe member~~ has not in the meantime returned to service. Upon payment of this sum his or her membership in the System ceases. If ~~hethe individual~~ becomes a member afterwards, no credit shall be allowed for any service previously rendered except as provided in G.S. 120-4.14 and the payment shall be in full and complete discharge of any rights in or to any benefits otherwise payable under this Article. Upon receipt of proof satisfactory to the Board of Trustees of the death, prior to retirement, of a member or former member, there shall be paid to the person or persons ~~hethe member or former member~~ nominated by electronic submission ~~prior to completing 10 years of service~~ in a form approved by the Board of Trustees or by written designation duly acknowledged and filed with the Board of Trustees, if the person or persons are living at the time of the member's death, otherwise to the member's legal representatives, the amount of ~~histhe member's~~ accumulated contributions at the time of ~~histhe member's~~ death, unless the beneficiary elects to receive the alternate benefit under the provisions of G.S. 120-4.28."

SECTION 3.(g) This section becomes effective January 1, 2018.

SECTION 4.(a) G.S. 135-1(11) reads as rewritten:

"(11) "Employer" shall mean the State of North Carolina, the county board of education, the city board of education, the State Board of Education, the board of trustees of the University of North Carolina, the board of trustees of other institutions and agencies supported and under the control of the State, or any other agency of and within the State by which a teacher or other employee is paid. For purposes of reporting under the pronouncements by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, the Retirement System is a multi-employer plan."

SECTION 4.(b) This section becomes effective June 30, 2017.

SECTION 5.(a) G.S. 135-7 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

"(g) Legislative Enactment Implementation Arrangement. – The Legislative Enactment Implementation Arrangement (LEIA) is established effective October 1, 2017, and placed under the management of the Board of Trustees. The purpose of the LEIA is to provide for timely administrative implementation of legislative provisions regarding the retirement of, or payment of retirement benefits to, public officers or public employees. The LEIA shall have the following parameters:

- (1) Administration. – The LEIA shall be administered by the Board of Trustees, which shall compile and maintain all records necessary or appropriate for administration. The Board of Trustees shall have full discretionary authority to interpret, construe, and implement the LEIA and to adopt such rules and regulations as may be necessary or desirable to implement the provisions of the LEIA.
- (2) Funding of the LEIA. – In the event that the General Assembly creates or modifies any provision for the retirement of, or payment of retirement benefits to, public officers or public employees that has a cost savings as measured by actuarial note required by Article 15 of Chapter 120 of the General Statutes, the Board of Trustees may direct up to one hundredth percent (0.01%) of the required contributions to fund the LEIA. These funds must be deposited in a separate fund from the fund into which regular employer contributions are deposited for the Retirement System. The Board of Trustees shall not direct any employer contributions into the LEIA after November 1, 2021.
- (3) Allocation of LEIA funds. – The Board of Trustees may allocate LEIA funds to the implementation of legislative provisions regarding the retirement of, or payment for retirement benefits to, public officers or public employees, subject to the following restrictions:
 - a. The Board of Trustees must identify individual implementation projects that will be paid for with LEIA funds. These implementation projects must be necessitated by a specific statute or session law that was enacted within five years of the allocation of the funds. The Board of Trustees must also identify the number of years for which each individual implementation project will be paid for with LEIA funds.
 - b. For implementation projects that will be paid for with LEIA funds for a period of one year or less, the Board of Trustees must determine that the cost savings from implementing the project is projected to be no less than half of the amount of LEIA funds utilized to pay for implementation.
 - c. For implementation projects that will be paid for with LEIA funds for a period of greater than one year, but not more than four years, the Board of Trustees must determine that the long-term cost savings

from implementing the project is projected to be at least three times greater than the cost of implementation.

d. No implementation project shall be paid for with LEIA funds for a period of more than four years.

(4) Treatment of unused assets. – Any assets of the LEIA not used to pay allowed administrative expenses for timely administrative implementation of legislative provisions shall be transferred to the Retirement System as an additional employer contribution.

(5) Reporting. – The Department of State Treasurer shall report to the Board of Trustees, the Joint Legislative Commission on Government Operations, and the Fiscal Research Division on or before August 1 of each year on the (i) amounts and sources of funds collected by year pursuant to this section and (ii) the amounts expended, the projects for which those funds were expended, and the current status of the projects. The Board of Trustees shall also post this report on its public Web site."

SECTION 5.(b) G.S. 128-29 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

"(g) Legislative Enactment Implementation Arrangement. – The Legislative Enactment Implementation Arrangement (LEIA) is established effective October 1, 2017, and placed under the management of the Board of Trustees. The purpose of the LEIA is to provide for timely administrative implementation of legislative provisions regarding the retirement of, or payment of retirement benefits to, public officers or public employees. The LEIA shall have the following parameters:

(1) Administration. – The LEIA shall be administered by the Board of Trustees, which shall compile and maintain all records necessary or appropriate for administration. The Board of Trustees shall have full discretionary authority to interpret, construe, and implement the LEIA and to adopt such rules and regulations as may be necessary or desirable to implement the provisions of the LEIA.

(2) Funding of the LEIA. – In the event that the General Assembly creates or modifies any provision for the retirement of, or payment of retirement benefits to, public officers or public employees that has a cost savings as measured by actuarial note required by Article 15 of Chapter 120 of the General Statutes, the Board of Trustees may direct up to one hundredth percent (0.01%) of the required contributions to fund the LEIA. These funds must be deposited in a separate fund from the fund into which regular employer contributions are deposited for the Retirement System. The Board of Trustees shall not direct any employer contributions into the LEIA after November 1, 2021.

(3) Allocation of LEIA funds. – The Board of Trustees may allocate LEIA funds to the implementation of legislative provisions regarding the retirement of, or payment for retirement benefits to, public officers or public employees, subject to the following restrictions:

a. The Board of Trustees must identify individual implementation projects that will be paid for with LEIA funds. These implementation projects must be necessitated by a specific statute or session law that was enacted within five years of the allocation of the funds. The Board of Trustees must also identify the number of years for which each individual implementation project will be paid for with LEIA funds.

b. For implementation projects that will be paid for with LEIA funds for a period of one year or less, the Board of Trustees must determine

- that the cost savings from implementing the project is projected to be no less than half of the amount of LEIA funds utilized to pay for implementation.
- c. For implementation projects that will be paid for with LEIA funds for a period of greater than one year, but not more than four years, the Board of Trustees must determine that the long-term cost savings from implementing the project is projected to be at least three times greater than the cost of implementation.
- d. No implementation project shall be paid for with LEIA funds for a period of more than four years.
- (4) Treatment of unused assets. – Any assets of the LEIA not used to pay allowed administrative expenses for timely administrative implementation of legislative provisions shall be transferred to the Retirement System as an additional employer contribution.
- (5) Reporting. – The Department of State Treasurer shall report to the Board of Trustees, the Joint Legislative Commission on Government Operations, and the Fiscal Research Division on or before August 1 of each year on the (i) amounts and sources of funds collected by year pursuant to this section and (ii) the amounts expended, the projects for which those funds were expended, and the current status of the projects. The Board of Trustees shall also post this report on its public Web site."

SECTION 5.(c) This section becomes effective October 1, 2017.

SECTION 6. Article 6 of Chapter 147 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 147-68.2. Confidentiality of warrants issued by the State.

Information contained in records held by the State about outstanding, unpaid warrants issued by the State are confidential and not available for public inspection to the extent that the Treasurer determines that information would be sufficient to counterfeit a warrant."

SECTION 7. G.S. 147-9.4 reads as rewritten:

"§ 147-9.4. Deferred Compensation Plan.

(a) Notwithstanding the provisions of G.S. 143B-426.40A and notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary relating to salaries or salary schedules of teachers or State employees, the chief executive officer of an employer, on behalf of the employer, may ~~from time to time~~ enter into a contract with a teacher or employee under which the teacher or employee irrevocably elects to defer receipt of a portion of his or her scheduled salary in the future, but only if, as a result of such contract, the income so deferred is deferred pursuant to the Plan provided for in G.S. 143B-426.24 or pursuant to some other plan established before January 1, 1983, and is not constructively received by the teacher or employee in the year in which it was earned, for State and federal income tax purposes. In addition, the income so deferred shall be invested in the manner provided in the applicable Plan; however, the teacher or employee may revoke his or her election to participate and may amend the amount of compensation to be deferred by signing and filing with the Board a written revocation or amendment on a form and in the manner approved by the Board. Any such revocation or amendment shall be effective prospectively only and shall cause no change in the allocation of amounts invested prior to the filing date of such revocation or amendment.

A teacher or employee who has agreed to the deferral of income pursuant to the Plan shall have the right to receive the income so deferred only in accordance with the provisions of the Plan. Funds so deferred shall not be in lieu of any amount earned by the teacher or employee before his or her election to defer compensation became effective. The agreement to defer income referred to herein shall be effective under such necessary regulations and procedures as are adopted by the Board, and on forms prepared or approved by it. A teacher or employee who

agrees to defer income as provided in this section may authorize payroll deductions for deferral of the income. An employer shall make payroll deduction available for a teacher or employee who authorizes payroll deduction. Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, the amount by which the salary of a teacher or employee is deferred pursuant to the Plan shall not be excluded, but shall be included, in computing and making payroll deductions for social security and retirement system purposes, if any, and in computing and providing matching funds for retirement system purposes, if any.

Except for the applications of the provisions of G.S. 110-136, and in connection with a court-ordered equitable distribution under G.S. 50-20, the right of a teacher or employee, who elects to defer income pursuant to the North Carolina Public Employee Deferred Compensation Plan under G.S. 143B-426.24, to benefits that have vested under the Plan, is nonforfeitable. These benefits are exempt from levy, sale, and garnishment, except as provided by this section.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of G.S. 143B-426.40A and any provision of law to the contrary relating to salaries or salary schedules of teachers or State employees, the chief executive officer of an employer, on behalf of the employer, may contribute to a deferred compensation account of a teacher or employee additional funds, not in excess of limitations under federal law; provided that for State and federal income taxes purposes, the funds are not constructively received by the teacher or employee in the year in which the funds were earned."

SECTION 8.(a) G.S. 143B-426.40G(b) reads as rewritten:

"(b) The State Treasurer may impose on an agency with non-State funds a fee of fifteen dollars (\$15.00) for each check drawn against the agency's disbursing account that causes the balance in the account to be in overdraft or while the account is in overdraft. The financial officer shall pay the fee from the agency's non-State or personal funds to the General Fund to the credit of the miscellaneous nontax revenue account by the agency."

SECTION 8.(b) This section becomes effective October 1, 2017.

SECTION 9.(a) G.S. 135-4(e) reads as rewritten:

"(e) Creditable service at retirement on which the retirement allowance of a member shall be based shall consist of the membership service rendered by ~~him~~the member since he or she last became a member, and also if ~~he~~the member has a prior service certificate which is in full force and effect, the amount of service certified on ~~his~~the prior service certificate; and if ~~he~~the member has sick leave standing to ~~his~~the member's credit upon retirement on or after July 1, 1971, one month of credit for each 20 days or portion thereof, but not less than one hour; sick leave shall not be counted in computing creditable service for the purpose of determining eligibility for disability retirement or for a vested deferred allowance. Creditable service for unused sick leave shall be allowed only for sick leave accrued monthly during employment under a duly adopted sick leave policy and for which the member may be able to take credits and be paid for sick leave without restriction. However, in no instance shall unused sick leave be credited to a member's account at retirement if the member's last day of actual service is more than five years prior to the effective date of the member's retirement. Further, any agency with a sick leave policy that is more generous than that of all State agencies subject to the rules of the Office of State Human Resources shall proportionately adjust each of its retiring employees' sick leave balance to the balance that employee would have had under the rules of the Office of State Human Resources. Days of sick leave standing to a member's credit at retirement shall be determined by dividing the member's total hours of sick leave at retirement by the hours per month such leave was awarded under the employer's duly adopted sick leave policy as the policy applied to the member when the leave was accrued.

On and after July 1, 1971, a member whose account was closed on account of absence from service under the provisions of G.S. 135-3(3) and who subsequently returns to service for a period of five years, may thereafter repay in a lump sum the amount withdrawn plus regular interest thereon from the date of withdrawal through the year of repayment and thereby

increase his creditable service by the amount of creditable service lost when his account was closed.

On and after July 1, 1973, a member whose account in the North Carolina Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System was closed on account of absence from service under the provisions of G.S. 128-24(1a) and who subsequently became or becomes a member of this System with credit for five years of service, may thereafter repay in a lump sum the amount withdrawn from the North Carolina Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System plus regular interest thereon from the date of withdrawal through the year of repayment and thereby increase his creditable service in this System by the amount of creditable service lost when his account was closed.

On or after July 1, 1979, a member who has obtained 60 months of aggregate service, or five years of membership service, as an employee of the North Carolina General Assembly, except legislators, participants in the Legislative Intern Program and pages, may make a lump sum payment together with interest, and an administrative fee for such service, to the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System of an amount equal to what he would have contributed had he been a member on his first day of employment.

On and after January 1, 1985, the creditable service of a member who was a member of the Law-Enforcement Officers' Retirement System at the time of the transfer of law-enforcement officers employed by the State from that System to this Retirement System and whose accumulated contributions are transferred from that System to this Retirement System, shall include service that was creditable in the Law-Enforcement Officers' Retirement System; and membership service with that System shall be membership service with this Retirement System; provided, notwithstanding any provision of this Article to the contrary, any inchoate or accrued rights of such a member to purchase creditable service for military service, withdrawn service and prior service under the rules and regulations of the Law-Enforcement Officers' Retirement System shall not be diminished and may be purchased as creditable service with this Retirement System under the same conditions which would have otherwise applied."

SECTION 9.(b) G.S. 128-26(e) reads as rewritten:

"(e) Creditable service at retirement on which the retirement allowance of a member shall be based shall consist of the membership service rendered by ~~him~~the member since he or she last became a member, and also if ~~he~~the member has a prior service certificate which is in full force and effect, the amount of the service certified on ~~his~~the prior service certificate; and if ~~he~~the member has sick leave standing to ~~his~~the member's credit upon retirement on or after July 1, 1971, one month of credit for each 20 days or portion thereof, but not less than one hour; sick leave shall not be counted in computing creditable service for the purpose of determining eligibility for disability retirement or for a vested deferred allowance. Creditable service for unused sick leave shall be allowed only for sick leave accrued monthly during employment under a duly adopted sick leave policy and for which the member may be able to take credits and be paid for sick leave without restriction. However, in no instance shall unused sick leave be credited to a member's account at retirement if the member's last day of actual service is more than 365 days prior to the effective date of the member's retirement. Days of sick leave standing to a member's credit at retirement shall be determined by dividing the member's total hours of sick leave at retirement by the hours per month such leave was awarded under the employer's duly adopted sick leave policy as the policy applied to the member when the leave was accrued.

On and after July 1, 1971, a member whose account was closed on account of absence from service under the provisions of G.S. 128-24(1a) and who subsequently returns to service for a period of five years, may thereafter repay the amount withdrawn plus regular interest thereon from the date of withdrawal through the year of repayment and thereby increase his creditable service by the amount of creditable service lost when this account was closed.

On and after July 1, 1973, a member whose account in the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System was closed on account of absence from service under the provisions of G.S. 135-3(3) and who subsequently became or becomes a member of this System with credit for five years of service, may thereafter repay in a lump sum the amount withdrawn from the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System plus regular interest thereon from the date of withdrawal through the year of repayment and thereby increase his creditable service in this System by the amount of creditable service lost when his account was closed.

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Chapter, any member who entered service or was restored to service prior to July 1, 1982, and was excluded from membership service solely on account of having attained the age of 62 years, in accordance with former G.S. 128-24(3a), may purchase membership service credits for such excluded service by making a lump-sum payment equal to the contributions that would have been deducted pursuant to G.S. 128-30(b) had he been a member of the Retirement System, increased by interest calculated at a rate of seven percent (7%) per annum.

On and after January 1, 1986, the creditable service of a member who was a member of the Law Enforcement Officers' Retirement System at the time of the transfer of law enforcement officers employed by participating employers from that System to this Retirement System and whose accumulated contributions are transferred from that System to this Retirement System, includes service that was creditable in the Law Enforcement Officers' Retirement System; and membership service with that System is membership service with this Retirement System; provided, notwithstanding any provisions of this Article to the contrary, any inchoate or accrued rights of such a member to purchase creditable service for military service, withdrawn service and prior service under the rules and regulations of the Law Enforcement Officers' Retirement System may not be diminished and may be purchased as creditable service with this Retirement System under the same conditions that would have otherwise applied."

SECTION 9.(c) This section becomes effective January 1, 2018.

SECTION 10. G.S. 147-69.2A(a) reads as rewritten:

"(a) Firm to Administer Special Fund. – Following a public procurement process, a designee of the Governor, a designee of the State Treasurer, a designee of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and a designee of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall jointly and unanimously select a third-party professional investment management firm, ~~registered with~~ subject to the rules and regulations of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, to administer a special fund created to invest assets described in G.S. 147-69.2(b)(12)c. and select investment opportunities appropriate for receiving allocations from the Fund on the basis of potential return on investment and the risks attendant thereto. The State Treasurer shall assign professional and clerical staff to assist in the oversight of the Fund. All costs for the third-party investment management firm and the professional and clerical staff shall be borne by the Fund pursuant to G.S. 147-69.3(f). The State Treasurer shall discharge his or her duties with respect to the Fund as a fiduciary consistent with G.S. 147-69.7."

SECTION 11. G.S. 147-86.73(g1) reads as rewritten:

"(g1) Notice for Designated Beneficiary Receiving Medicaid. – The ABLÉ Account application ~~form package~~ approved in accordance with G.S. 147-86.71(b)(1) shall include notice of the State's right under subsection (e) of this section to file a claim for payment from a designated beneficiary's ABLÉ account following the death of a beneficiary who received medical assistance benefits."

SECTION 12. If any provision of this act or its application is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of this act that can be given effect without the invalid provisions or application, and to this end, the provisions of this act are severable.

SECTION 13. Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes law.
In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 28th day of June, 2017.

s/ Daniel J. Forest
President of the Senate

s/ David R. Lewis
Presiding Officer of the House of Representatives

s/ Roy Cooper
Governor

Approved 4:05 p.m. this 20th day of July, 2017