

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

Session 2005

## Legislative Actuarial Note

RETIREMENT

**BILL NUMBER:** House Bill 853 (First Edition)

**SHORT TITLE:** Reciprocity/Optional Retirement System.

**SPONSOR(S):** Representative Insko

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**FUNDS AFFECTED:** General Fund, Highway Fund and Receipt Fund

**SYSTEM OR PROGRAM AFFECTED:** Teachers' & State Employees' Retirement System

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 1, 2005

**BILL SUMMARY:** Some positions in the university system gives the employee the choice of participating in either the Teachers' & State Employees' Retirement System or the Optional Retirement Plan, which is a defined contribution plan whereby the employee contributes 6% of salary and the university contributes 6.84% of salary. In some instances, when an employee changes jobs, the employee will no longer be eligible to participate in the Optional Retirement Plan, so over a career where the employee might change jobs several times, they could be members of both systems. This change will simply allow the Teachers' & State Employees' Retirement System to use any service the employee has worked and participated in the Optional Retirement Plan to determine if they qualify for benefits.

For example, an employee comes to work with university and works ten years and was member of the State System. Then, the employee changes jobs and now can elect to participate in the Optional Retirement Plan and does so for next ten years. The employee terminates employment with a total of twenty years of service at age 55. Under present law, the employee could not receive a benefit from the State System until age 60 (reduced) or age 65 (unreduced). This change would cause the System to look at the total of 20 years service and age 55 to determine the qualification of a reduced early retirement but the retirement benefit would be calculated only on the ten years of service in the State System.

**ESTIMATED IMPACT ON STATE:** Both, the Retirement System's actuary, Mellon, and the General Assembly's actuary, Hartman & Associates, estimates the cost to be less than 0.01% of the payroll of the payroll of all members of the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System. Both actuaries realize the change would cost the System as a result of allowing employees to retire at a younger age than is allowed under the current law. The below cost is estimated to be the maximum annual cost.

	<u>2005-06</u>	<u>2006-07</u>	<u>2007-08</u>	<u>2008-09</u>	<u>2009-10</u>
General Fund	\$0.8M	\$0.8M	\$0.9M	\$0.9M	\$1.0M
Highway Fund	\$0.0M	\$0.0M	\$0.0M	\$0.0M	\$0.0M
Receipt Funds	<u>\$0.3M</u>	<u>\$0.3M</u>	<u>\$0.3M</u>	<u>\$0.3M</u>	<u>\$0.3M</u>
<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>\$1.1M</b>	<b>\$1.2M</b>	<b>\$1.2M</b>	<b>\$1.3M</b>	<b>\$1.3M</b>

**ASSUMPTIONS AND METHODOLOGY: Teachers' & State Employees' Retirement**

**System:** The cost estimates of the System's Actuary are based on the employee data, actuarial assumptions and actuarial methods used to prepare the December 31, 2003 actuarial valuation of the fund. The data included 303,768 active members with an annual payroll of \$10.1 billion and 123,077 retired members in receipt of annual pensions totaling \$2.1 billion. Significant actuarial assumptions used include (a) an investment return rate of 7.25%, (b) salary increase rate of 6.25%, (c) the George B. Buck Mortality Tables for deaths in service and after retirement and (d) rates of separation from active service based on System experience. The actuarial cost method used was the entry age normal method with open-end unfunded accrued liability and a frozen unfunded liquidation period of nine years. Detailed information concerning these assumptions and methods is shown in the actuary's report, which is available upon request from Stanley Moore.

**SOURCES OF DATA:** System Actuary - Mellon  
 General Assembly Actuary - Hartman & Associates, LLC

**TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS:** None

**FISCAL RESEARCH DIVISION (919) 733-4910** The above information is provided in accordance with North Carolina General Statute 120-114 and applicable Rules of the North Carolina Senate and House of Representatives

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**APPROVED BY:** James D. Johnson, Director  
 Fiscal Research Division



**DATE:** April 11, 2005

**Signed Copy Located in the NCGA Principal Clerk's Offices**