

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2007 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 336
 Budget and Taxation

(Senator Brinkley, *et al.*)

Correctional Officers' Retirement System - Membership - Correctional Laundry Officers

This bill requires individuals employed as correctional laundry officers to participate in the Correctional Officers' Retirement System (CORS) as a condition of their employment. It applies to individuals currently employed as correctional laundry officers as well as to all future employees in those positions.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2007.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: State pension liabilities increase by \$679,000, resulting in a \$43,000 increase in State pension contributions in FY 2009. Future contributions grow according to actuarial assumptions.

(in dollars)	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	0	43,000	45,000	47,000	49,000
Net Effect	\$0	(\$43,000)	(\$45,000)	(\$47,000)	(\$49,000)

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate effect

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: All prior service credit earned by correctional laundry officers in either the Employees' Retirement System (ERS) or the Employees' Pension System (EPS) transfers to CORS. In addition, the State Retirement and Pension System must transfer member contributions made on behalf of correctional laundry officer who are currently members of either ERS or EPS to CORS, plus 4% interest.

Correctional laundry officers who are current members of EPS would be exempt from statutory provisions requiring them to pay the difference between the lower EPS contribution rate and the higher CORS contribution rate for the prior service credit that transfers to CORS. However, members of ERS on June 30, 2007 who currently contribute 7% of their compensation would receive a refund of the difference between the higher ERS contribution and the CORS contribution, including 5% interest. In accordance with federal law, that refund could not be paid until a member terminates employment or retires.

As CORS members, the affected employees are entitled to a normal service retirement after 20 years of service or at age 55, provided they are employed as laundry officers during the five years immediately preceding retirement.

Current Law: Only correctional officers in the first six job classifications, security attendants at the Clifton T. Perkins Hospital Center, correctional dietary, maintenance, and supply officers, and certain local detention center officers participate in CORS. Correctional laundry officers participate in either ERS or EPS. **Exhibit 1** shows the key provisions of all three plans. As the exhibit shows, Chapter 110 of 2006 phased in a higher EPS employee contribution rate, from 2% in fiscal 2006 to 5% in fiscal 2009 and beyond. Once that increase is fully phased in, the key differences between EPS and CORS will be that CORS members can retire at a younger age and/or with fewer years of service and receive an unlimited cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). The unlimited COLA could be meaningful, although the Consumer Price Index has exceeded 3% annual growth just four times since 1990. CORS also provides surviving family members with more generous death benefits than ERS/EPS if the member dies or is killed in the line of duty. All three plans provide a benefit equal to 1.8% of average final compensation (AFC) for each year of creditable service.

Exhibit 1
Pension Plan Provisions

	<u>ERS</u>	<u>EPS</u>	<u>CORS</u>
Normal Retirement Age	60	62 ¹	55 ¹
Years of Service for Normal Retirement	30	30	20 ²
Employee Contribution	5% (capped COLA) 7% (unlimited COLA)	2% in FY 1998-2006 3% in FY 2007 4% in FY 2008 5% in FY 2009 and beyond	5%
Benefit Multiplier	1.8% of AFC	1.8% of AFC	1.8% of AFC
COLA	5% cap or unlimited	3% cap	unlimited

¹Retiree must have at least five years of service.

²The last five years must be as a correctional officer or security attendant at Perkins Hospital.

Source: *Maryland Annotated Code*, State Personnel and Pensions Article

When a member of EPS transfers service credit to another contributory system (such as CORS), the accumulated employer contributions made on his or her behalf must be transferred to the new system. However, State law also requires an individual who seeks to transfer service credit under these circumstances to deposit an amount equal to the difference between the employee contributions made to EPS and those required by CORS, including interest. In this case, EPS members transferring to CORS would have to pay the difference between their 2% employee contribution under EPS from fiscal 1998 through 2006 and the 5% employee contribution for CORS for each year of service credit they transfer to CORS. The bill exempts EPS members from that requirement. The Department of Legislative Services notes that CORS assets are subsumed within ERS assets, so a “transfer” of assets would not actually occur.

Background: Chapter 340 of 2006 included 647 correctional dietary, maintenance, and supply workers in CORS.

State Fiscal Effect: The State Retirement Agency reports that there are 11 correctional laundry officers who would be affected by this bill. Their average salary is \$47,645, and

they have an average of 14.5 years of service. Assuming that all 11 members are in EPS, the General Assembly's actuary estimates that total State pension liabilities would increase by \$679,000. Amortizing that liability over 25 years yields an increase in State pension contributions of \$43,000 in fiscal 2009, which grow each year according to actuarial assumptions.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Mercer Human Resources Consulting, Maryland State Retirement Agency, Department of Legislative Services

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nas/jr

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