

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE/SENATE BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE
House Bill 683/Senate Bill 960 –Optional Retirement Program--Membership
February 18, 2020 House/February 20, 2020 Senate
Elena Langrill: Written Testimony in Support

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on House Bill 683/Senate Bill 960. This bill would remove certain employees who have a particular history of employment with the State of Maryland, including the University of Maryland, from eligibility from the Optional Retirement Program (ORP) after July 1, 2020. The result is that such employees would continue participation in the State Employees' Pension System if employed by an ORP eligible employer. I am a career State employee who would be positively affected by this bill.

- I have been an Assistant Attorney General since June, 1986.
- For all but my first three years, I have been a part of the Educational Affairs Division, providing legal services to the State's public higher education institutions for, although my position has been switched among payrolls and personnel systems.
- For a brief period, from July, 1993 until February, 1997, my position was in the independent personnel system of the University System of Maryland, and I participated in the Optional Retirement Program.
- When my position was transferred back to the Office of the Attorney General and State Personnel Management System in 1997, I returned to the State Employees' Pension System, in which I participated from 1986—1993, and again 1997--present. My ORP account was closed within a month of my returning to the OAG payroll.
- Over time, all attorney positions in the Educational Affairs Division have been moved onto the University payroll, except for mine. Several times, the Office of the Attorney General has suggested my transfer to the University payroll. It would be far simpler to administer the division if all attorneys were on the same payroll, had the same timekeeping, holidays, benefits, etc. I have resisted such a transfer, because Maryland law would require that I leave the Employees' Pension System for the Optional Retirement Program. While I have been successful to date, I am concerned about the impact on my family if my position were transferred. I am 63 years old, and leaving the Employees' Pension System would cap my years of service, limit my pension benefit because it would cap my average final compensation (based on high three years), and cause me to lose the ability to convert more than 30 years of accrued sick leave into creditable service counted towards my pension benefit.
- HB683/SB960 would also simplify administration for the Office of the Attorney General by using a single personnel system for all attorneys in the Educational Affairs Division, also eliminating the need for the University to transfer funds for my position.
- HB683/SB960 would provide that an individual in my situation would be ineligible for the ORP after July 1, 2020 regardless of which State agency employs that person. My understanding is this bill would result in no material fiscal impact to the State.

Thank you for allowing me to share my history and the reasons why I ask that you support HB683/ SB960.