

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2023 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 113

By Senator Karnes

[Introduced January 11, 2023; referred to
the Committee on Pensions]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §18-7A-17 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating
 2 to providing that members of the State Teachers Retirement System shall be considered
 3 absent from service as a teacher or nonteacher while serving as an officer with a statewide
 4 professional teaching association, or who have served in that capacity; and providing that
 5 retirants, who served in that capacity while members, shall be considered to have been
 6 absent from service as a teacher by reason of that service.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 7A. STATE TEACHERS RETIREMENT SYSTEM.

§18-7A-17. Statement and computation of teachers' service.

1 (a) Under rules adopted by the retirement board, each teacher and nonteaching member
 2 shall file a detailed statement of his or her length of service as a teacher or nonteacher for which he
 3 or she claims credit. The retirement board shall determine what part of a year is the equivalent of a
 4 year of service. In computing the service, however, it shall credit no period of more than a month's
 5 duration during which a member was absent without pay, nor shall it credit for more than one year
 6 of service performed in any calendar year.

7 (b) For service as a teacher in the employment of the federal government, or a state or
 8 territory of the United States, or a governmental subdivision of that state or territory, the retirement
 9 board shall grant credit to the member: *Provided*, That the member shall pay to the system 12
 10 percent of that member's gross salary earned during the first full year of current employment
 11 whether a member of the Teachers Retirement System or the Teachers' Defined Contribution
 12 Retirement System, times the number of years for which credit is granted, plus interest at a rate to
 13 be determined by the retirement board. The interest shall be deposited in the reserve fund and
 14 service credit granted at the time of retirement shall not exceed the lesser of 10 years or 50
 15 percent of the member's total service as a teacher in West Virginia. Any purchase of out-of-state
 16 service, as provided in this article, shall not be used to establish eligibility for a retirement
 17 allowance and the retirement board shall grant credit for the purchased service as additional

18 service only: *Provided, however,* That a purchase of out-of-state service is prohibited if the service
19 is used to obtain a retirement benefit from another retirement system: *Provided further,* That
20 salaries paid to members for service prior to entrance into the retirement system shall not be used
21 to compute the average final salary of the member under the retirement system.

22 (c) No members shall be considered absent from service while serving as a member or
23 employee of the Legislature of the State of West Virginia during any duly constituted session of
24 that body or while serving as an elected member of a county commission during any duly
25 constituted session of that body.

26 (d) No member shall be considered absent from service as a teacher or nonteacher while
27 serving as an officer with a statewide professional teaching association, or who has served in that
28 capacity, and no retirant, who served in that capacity while a member, shall be considered to have
29 been absent from service as a teacher by reason of that service: *Provided,* That the period of
30 service credit granted for that service shall not exceed 10 years: *Provided, however,* That a
31 member or retirant who is serving or has served as an officer of a statewide professional teaching
32 association shall make deposits to the Teachers Retirement System, for the time of any absence,
33 in an amount double the amount which he or she would have contributed in his or her regular
34 assignment for a like period of time: *Provided further,* That this subsection shall only apply to any
35 member serving as an officer with a statewide professional teaching association who was an
36 officer on or before January 1, 2023.

37 (e) The Teachers Retirement System shall grant service credit to any former or present
38 member of the West Virginia Public Employees Retirement System who has been a contributing
39 member of the Teachers Retirement System for more than three years, for service previously
40 credited by the Public Employees Retirement System upon his or her written request and: (1) Shall
41 require the transfer of the member's Public Employees Retirement System accumulated
42 contributions to the Teachers Retirement System; or (2) shall require a repayment of the amount
43 withdrawn from the Public Employees Retirement System, plus interest at a rate to be determined

44 by the retirement board, compounded annually from the date of withdrawal to the date of payment,
45 any time prior to the member's effective retirement date: *Provided*, That there shall be added by
46 the member to the amounts transferred or repaid under this subsection an amount which shall be
47 sufficient to equal the contributions he or she would have made had the member been under the
48 Teachers Retirement System during the period of his or her membership in the Public Employees
49 Retirement System, plus interest at a rate determined by the retirement board, compounded
50 annually from the date the additional contribution would have been made had the member been
51 under the Teachers Retirement System to the date of payment. All interest paid or transferred shall
52 be deposited in the reserve fund.

53 (f) For service as a teacher in an elementary or secondary parochial school, located within
54 this state and fully accredited by the West Virginia Department of Education, the retirement board
55 shall grant credit to the member: *Provided*, That the member shall pay to the system 12 percent of
56 that member's gross salary earned during the first full year of current employment whether a
57 member of the Teachers Retirement System or the Teachers' Defined Contribution Retirement
58 System, times the number of years for which credit is granted, plus interest at a rate to be
59 determined by the retirement board. The interest shall be deposited in the reserve fund and
60 service granted at the time of retirement shall not exceed the lesser of 10 years or 50 percent of
61 the member's total service as a teacher in the West Virginia public school system. Any purchase of
62 parochial school service, as provided in this section, may not be used to establish eligibility for a
63 retirement allowance and retirement board shall grant credit for the purchase as additional service
64 only: *Provided, however*, That a purchase of parochial school service is prohibited if the service is
65 used to obtain a retirement benefit from another retirement system.

66 (g) Active members who previously worked in Comprehensive Employment and Training
67 Act (CETA) may receive service credit for time served in that capacity: *Provided*, That in order to
68 receive service credit under the provisions of this subsection the following conditions must be met:
69 (1) The member must have moved from temporary employment with the participating employer to

70 permanent full-time employment with the participating employer within 120 days following the
71 termination of the member's CETA employment; (2) the retirement board must receive evidence
72 that establishes to a reasonable degree of certainty as determined by the retirement board that the
73 member previously worked in CETA; and (3) the member shall pay to the retirement board an
74 amount equal to the employer and employee contribution plus interest at the amount set by the
75 retirement board for the amount of service credit sought pursuant to this subsection: *Provided,*
76 *however,* That the maximum service credit that may be obtained under the provisions of this
77 subsection is two years: *Provided further,* That a member must apply and pay for the service credit
78 allowed under this subsection and provide all necessary documentation by March 31, 2003: *And*
79 *provided further,* That the retirement board shall exercise due diligence to notify affected
80 employees of the provisions of this subsection.

81 (h) If a member is not eligible for prior service credit or pension as provided in this article,
82 then his or her prior service shall not be considered a part of his or her total service.

83 (i) A member who withdrew from membership may regain his or her former membership
84 rights as specified in §18-7A-13 of this code only in case he or she has served two years since his
85 or her last withdrawal.

86 (j) Subject to the provisions of subsections (a) through (k), inclusive, of this section, the
87 retirement board shall verify as soon as practicable the statements of service submitted. The
88 retirement board shall issue prior service certificates to all persons eligible for the certificates
89 under the provisions of this article. The certificates shall state the length of the prior service credit,
90 but in no case shall the prior service credit exceed 40 years.

91 (k) Notwithstanding any provision of this article to the contrary, when a member is or has
92 been elected to serve as a member of the Legislature, and the proper discharge of his or her duties
93 of public office require that member to be absent from his or her teaching or administrative duties,
94 the time served in discharge of his or her duties of the legislative office are credited as time served
95 for purposes of computing service credit: *Provided,* That the retirement board may not require any

96 additional contributions from that member in order for the retirement board to credit him or her with
97 the contributing service credit earned while discharging official legislative duties: *Provided,*
98 *however,* That nothing in this section may be construed to relieve the employer from making the
99 employer contribution at the member's regular salary rate or rate of pay from that employer on the
100 contributing service credit earned while the member is discharging his or her official legislative
101 duties. These employer payments shall commence as of June 1, 2000: *Provided further,* That any
102 member to which the provisions of this subsection apply may elect to pay to the retirement board
103 an amount equal to what his or her contribution would have been for those periods of time he or
104 she was serving in the Legislature. The periods of time upon which the member paid his or her
105 contribution shall then be included for purposes of determining his or her final average salary as
106 well as for determining years of service: *And provided further,* That a member using the provisions
107 of this subsection is not required to pay interest on any contributions he or she may decide to
108 make.

109 (l) The Teachers Retirement System shall grant service credit to any former member of the
110 State Police Death, Disability and Retirement System who has been a contributing member for
111 more than three years for service previously credited by the State Police Death, Disability and
112 Retirement System; and: (1) Shall require the transfer of the member's contributions to the
113 Teachers Retirement System; or (2) shall require a repayment of the amount withdrawn any time
114 prior to the member's retirement: *Provided,* That the member shall add to the amounts transferred
115 or repaid under this paragraph an amount which is sufficient to equal the contributions he or she
116 would have made had the member been under the Teachers Retirement System during the period
117 of his or her membership in the State Police Death, Disability and Retirement System plus interest
118 at a rate to be determined by the retirement board compounded annually from the date of
119 withdrawal to the date of payment. The interest paid shall be deposited in the reserve fund.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to provide that members of the State Teachers Retirement System shall be considered absent from service as a teacher or nonteacher while serving as an officer with a statewide professional teaching association, or who have served in that

capacity; and providing that retirants, who served in that capacity while members, shall be considered to have been absent from service as a teacher by reason of that service.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law, and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.