



NYSAC
NEW YORK STATE
ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

Hon. Lucille M. McKnight, President

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Memorandum in Opposition

S.7855 (Lanza) / A.8596-b (Abbate)

An Act to amend the retirement and social security law, in relation to the retirement of state, county, municipal and affiliated employer 911 operators

The New York State Association of Counties has reviewed the above referenced bill and **opposes** its enactment into law.

This bill amends the retirement and social security law to provide for an optional 25 year retirement program for state, county and municipal 911 operators.

Under the terms of this bill, employees working as a public safety dispatcher, public safety telecommunicator or communications officer in a state or municipal 911 center will be able to retire after 25 years of service regardless of age, if their employer elects to provide this benefit.

This benefit will result in an increase in public employer contributions of approximately 2 % of the employees' annual salary. In addition to this increased annual contribution, an immediate past service cost will be assessed on each employer electing to provide this benefit option based upon the employee's length of service, age and salary which can be amortized over a five or ten year period.

The soaring costs of employer contributions to the common retirement system have had a severe impact on all county budgets. Since 2000, the year in which a massive benefit enhancement for all members of the New York State and Local Employee Retirement System was enacted into law, New York counties have seen their annual contributions for employee pension under NYSLERS rise from \$47,550,204 in 2000 to \$447,024,967 in 2007, an **increase of 840%**. This massive contribution increase, brought about by the benefit enhancements and a subsequent downturn in the economy, was borne by local taxpayers even though total county salaries for this same time period rose by only 16%, well below the 23% rate of inflation for the years between 2000- 2007, as reported by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

NYSAC cannot support any benefit increase, mandatory or otherwise, that could lead to additional increased pension costs to local governments and the already overburden taxpayers they serve.

For over 20 years, NYSAC has opposed the enactment of these special retirement plans because of the fear that they would result in a proliferation of differing retirement options. This fear has unfortunately become reality, with over 75 separate pension options existing in the NYSLERS and NYSPFRS, creating confusion and additional administrative costs for the operation of the common retirement system.

For the above stated reasons, NYSAC strongly opposes its enactment into law.

The New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC), founded in 1925, is a bi-partisan municipal association representing the 62 counties of New York State. NYSAC is the only statewide association representing the interests of close to 5,000 elected and appointed county officials, including county executives, legislators, supervisors, administrators, commissioners and other county employees who deliver essential services to the public.

To: Assembly Leadership
Assembly Ways & Means
Senate Leadership
Senate Civil Service and Pensions

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