

SB 425 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Business and Labor

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Meeting Dates: 5/12, 5/17

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

States that Legislative Assembly finds and declares that telecommunicators are first responders.

Fiscal: No impact

Revenue: No impact

Senate vote: 25-3 (Nays: Linthicum, Robinson, Thatcher)

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Physical and mental demands on telecommunicators
- No immediate effect to benefits under the Public Employees Retirement System
- Efforts to change IRS regulations that would effect retirement benefits of telecommunicators

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) provides retirement benefits for state agencies and approximately 900 units of local government. PERS is overseen by a five-member board that appoints an executive director to manage the agency's daily operations. Oregon law requires the board to take all actions necessary to maintain qualification of PERS as a qualified government retirement plan and trust under the Internal Revenue Code.

Most PERS members are eligible for full retirement benefits after 30 years of service or at the minimum retirement age, which ranges from 58 to 65. Telecommunicators, defined as emergency communicators and public safety dispatchers, are generally eligible for full retirement benefits after 25 years of service or at the minimum retirement age of 55 for some members. Police officers and firefighters can be eligible for full benefits with less than 25 years of service and generally have the lowest minimum retirement age.

Senate Bill 425 A states that the Legislative Assembly finds and declares that telecommunicators are first responders. Proponents testified that the finding supports national efforts to treat telecommunicators as law enforcement under a qualified government retirement plan.