

# PSERS Proposal

## Issue

Some policy makers may believe older employees in certain occupations are exposed to an inappropriate amount of workplace risk. These policy makers may seek to expand the Public Safety Employees' Retirement System (PSERS) membership as a means of addressing this risk.

Stakeholders have approached the SCPP regarding a potential new proposal to expand PSERS membership.

## Background

In 2012, the Legislature reduced early retirement benefits for newly hired teachers, school employees, and general public employees. The Legislature also required the SCPP to study high-risk job classifications for possible inclusion in PSERS.

The SCPP completed the [study](#) during the 2012 Interim. The study found a handful of occupations had higher rates of serious workplace injury. The committee made no formal policy recommendations as a result of the study.

The SCPP continued to study [PSERS membership](#) during the 2013 Interim; focusing on [Engrossed House Bill \(EHB\) 1923](#). EHB 1923 was a non-SCPP bill introduced during the 2013 Session that would have expanded PSERS for certain Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and corrections employees. The bill passed the House floor, but not the Legislature.

## Highlights Of Analysis

- ❖ There are options for addressing workplace risk both inside and outside of pension policy, and policy makers may differ on their preferred approach.
- ❖ Expanding PSERS may mitigate the impacts of some job risks for older employees. However, not all job risk can be eliminated.
- ❖ Expanding PSERS allows enhancing benefits without increasing costs to non-public safety employees or employers.
- ❖ Expanding PSERS to address risk has implications for affordability, contractual rights, and retention.

## Stakeholder Proposal

Expand PSERS membership to include employees who:

- ❖ Provide nursing care to or ensure the custody and safety of offender, probationary, and patient populations at the following DSHS institutions.
  - ◇ Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration.
  - ◇ Mental health hospitals.
  - ◇ Child Study and Treatment Center,
  - ◇ Special Commitment Center.
  - ◇ Institutions or residential sites that serve developmentally disabled patients or offenders.
- ❖ Provide nursing care to offender and patient populations at Department of Corrections, local corrections departments, and Department of Veterans Affairs.
- ❖ Supervise eligible members meeting the above criteria.

## Committee Activity

The committee considered this issue and received public comment at the December meeting.

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