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**HOUSE BILL NO. 2638**

Offered January 11, 2001

*A BILL to amend and reenact § 51.1-138 of the Code of Virginia, relating to retirement benefits for local law enforcement officers, fire fighters, and emergency medical technicians.*

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Patron—Callahan

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Referred to Committee on Appropriations

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:****1. That § 51.1-138 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:****§ 51.1-138. Benefits.**

A. Employees who become members under this article and on whose behalf contributions are paid as provided in this article shall be entitled to benefits under the retirement system.

B. By resolution legally adopted and approved by the Board, the employer may elect to provide benefits equivalent to those provided under the State Police Officers' Retirement System, as set out in Chapter 2 (§ 51.1-200 et seq.) of this title except for § 51.1-209, in lieu of the benefits that would otherwise be provided hereunder for any employees who are employed in (i) law-enforcement positions comparably hazardous to that of a state police officer, including any sworn law-enforcement officer who has the duty and obligation to enforce the penal and traffic laws of this Commonwealth as directed by his superior officer, if so certified by his appointing authority, (ii) positions as full-time salaried fire fighters or emergency medical technicians as both are defined in § 15.2-1512.2, or (iii) positions as regional jail superintendents and jail officers of regional jail farms, regional jails or jail authorities, as approved by the respective jail board or authority and by the participating political subdivisions of such entities. Sheriffs of political subdivisions which participate in the retirement system shall receive benefits equivalent to those of state police officers, except for the benefits provided under § 51.1-209, regardless of whether the employer has elected to provide equivalent benefits as set out in this subsection. *Whether or not an employer has elected to provide benefits equivalent to those of state police officers as set out in this subsection, all fire fighters and emergency medical technicians of political subdivisions that participate in the retirement system shall be eligible for a service retirement allowance, without any actuarial reduction in the amount of the allowance, upon completion of twenty-five years of creditable service regardless of age.*

C. Each employer providing the benefits of subsection B for its employees prior to July 1, 1990, may elect to provide for the early retirement of employees as set forth in this subsection in lieu of the early retirement and death before retirement provisions of the State Police Officers' Retirement System. Such election must be made to the Board in writing prior to July 1, 1990. Any member in service on or after his fifty-fifth birthday with five or more years of creditable service may retire upon written notification to the Board setting forth at what time the retirement is to become effective. The effective date shall be after his last day of service but shall not be more than ninety days prior to the filing of such notice. The member shall receive an allowance which shall be determined in the same manner as for retirement at an employee's normal retirement with creditable service and average final compensation being determined as of the date of his actual retirement. If the member has less than thirty years of service at retirement, the amount of the retirement allowance shall be reduced on an actuarial equivalent basis for the period by which the actual retirement date precedes the earlier of (i) the member's normal retirement date or (ii) the first date on or after the member's fifty-fifth birthday on which the member would have completed a total of thirty years of creditable service.

Members retiring under the provisions of this subsection shall be entitled to receive post-retirement supplements as provided in § 51.1-166. In computing the amount of any supplement, any additional allowances being paid under the provisions of subsection B of § 51.1-206 shall be disregarded. In the case of death before retirement, members whose employers elect to provide benefits in accordance with the provisions of this subsection and who have not attained the age of fifty-five on the date of death shall be assumed to be fifty-five years of age for the purposes of reducing the benefits on an actuarial equivalent basis.

D. The retirement system shall not be liable for the payment of any retirement allowances or other benefits on behalf of a member or beneficiary of a member for which reserves have not been previously created from funds contributed by the employer or the members for such benefits.

INTRODUCED

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