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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 680

Offered January 12, 2011

Proposing an amendment to Section 11 of Article X of the Constitution of Virginia, relating to contributions to defined benefit retirement plans maintained for state employees and certain local employees.

Patrons—Englin, Abbott, Armstrong, BaCote, Brink, Bulova, Ebbin, Filler-Corn, Herring, Hope, Johnson, Keam, Kory, Lewis, McClellan, Miller, P.J., Morrissey, Plum, Sickles, Surovell, Tata, Torian, Ward and Watts; Senator: Edwards

Referred to Committee on Privileges and Elections

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, a majority of the members elected to each house agreeing, That the following amendment to the Constitution of Virginia be, and the same hereby is, proposed and referred to the General Assembly at its first regular session held after the next general election of members of the House of Delegates for its concurrence in conformity with the provisions of Section 1 of Article XII of the Constitution of Virginia, namely:

Amend Section 11 of Article X of the Constitution of Virginia as follows:

ARTICLE X

TAXATION AND FINANCE

Section 11. Governmental employees retirement system.

(a) The General Assembly shall maintain a retirement system for state employees and employees of participating political subdivisions and school divisions. The funds of the retirement system shall be deemed separate and independent trust funds, shall be segregated from all other funds of the Commonwealth, and shall be invested and administered solely in the interests of the members and beneficiaries thereof. Neither the General Assembly nor any public officer, employee, or agency shall use or authorize the use of such trust funds for any purpose other than as provided in law for benefits, refunds, and administrative expenses, including but not limited to legislative oversight of the retirement system. Such trust funds shall be invested as authorized by law. Retirement system benefits shall be funded using methods which are consistent with generally accepted actuarial principles and reflective of current benefits provided under law.

(b) (1) Contributions to defined benefit retirement plans established by the General Assembly and maintained for state employees and employees of participating political subdivisions and school divisions shall be paid in strict adherence with the contribution rates and times for the payment of such contributions as recommended by the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Retirement System or by any successor body or agency to the Board, based upon contribution rates determined by its official actuary. The Board or any successor shall recommend contribution rates that are reasonably anticipated to ensure the payment of retirement benefits, refunds, and administrative expenses provided under law. The Board or any successor shall transmit the contribution requirements in writing to the Governor and the General Assembly and participating political subdivisions and school divisions, as applicable, within the time frames required by law.

(2) Notwithstanding any other provision of this subsection, the General Assembly may set contribution rates that are not in strict adherence to the contribution rates recommended by the Board or any successor for any or all of the Commonwealth's fiscal years beginning on or after July 1, 2012, but not including any fiscal year beginning on or after July 1, 2018. No deferral of contributions shall be deemed to have occurred under subsection (d) and the four-fifths vote under subsection (d) shall not be required for (i) the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2012, or July 1, 2013, so long as the contribution rate set for the applicable defined benefit retirement plan for the fiscal year is at least equal to seventy-five percent of the contribution rate recommended by the Board or any successor; (ii) the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014, or July 1, 2015, so long as the contribution rate set for the applicable defined benefit retirement plan for the fiscal year is at least equal to eighty-four percent of the contribution rate recommended by the Board or any successor; or (iii) the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2016, or July 1, 2017, so long as the contribution rate set for the applicable defined benefit retirement plan for the fiscal year is at least equal to ninety-two percent of the contribution rate recommended by the Board or any successor.

However, the four-fifths vote under subsection (d) shall be required in order for the General Assembly to set contribution rates that are less than the minimum contribution rates provided herein. To the extent that the General Assembly sets a contribution rate that is less than the minimum provided, then the difference between the amount reasonably estimated to be contributed using such minimum

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57 contribution rate and the amount reasonably estimated to be contributed using the contribution rate set
58 by the General Assembly shall be deemed a deferral of contributions that shall be repaid under
59 subsection (f).

60 (c) (1) For purposes of contribution rates for defined benefit retirement plans, the amortization
61 period for the payment of retirement obligations relating to such plans shall be the amortization period
62 as set by the General Assembly, which period shall not exceed thirty years.

63 However, if generally accepted actuarial principles or generally accepted accounting principles
64 establish an amortization period for the payment of retirement obligations under defined benefit
65 retirement plans that is shorter than the amortization period established by the General Assembly, then
66 for purposes of such contribution rates the Board or any successor shall use the longest amortization
67 period that (i) is in accordance with generally accepted actuarial principles or generally accepted
68 accounting principles and (ii) does not exceed the amortization period established by the General
69 Assembly.

70 (2) All other factors or variables generally used in setting such contribution rates, including but not
71 limited to inflation rates, life expectancies, and forecasts of increases in compensation, shall be
72 determined by the Board or any successor in consultation with its official actuary.

73 The actuarial rate of return on the investment of such contributions that is assumed by the Board or
74 any successor shall be consistent with the assumed actuarial rates of return on the investment of defined
75 benefit retirement contributions currently being used by all other states having general obligation bonds
76 currently graded with the highest grade given by all nationally recognized credit rating agencies and
77 having defined benefit retirement plans covering state employees. The actuarial rate of return on
78 investment assumed by the Board or any successor shall be a rate of return that would have been
79 reasonably determined by a professional actuary under the same prevailing conditions.

80 (d) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (1) of subsection (b), the General Assembly may
81 provide for the deferral of all or any portion of the required contributions to any or all of such defined
82 benefit retirement plans for any fiscal year by a recorded affirmative vote of four-fifths of the members
83 elected to each house. The vote by the General Assembly shall be a separate vote and the question to be
84 voted on shall be whether to provide for the deferral of contributions for such fiscal year, and the
85 question shall include the total amount of contributions reasonably estimated to be deferred for the
86 fiscal year.

87 (e) Retirement contributions deferred in 2010 as described under paragraph I 5 of Item 469 of
88 Chapter 874 of the Acts of Assembly of 2010 shall be repaid pursuant to subsection (f), except that the
89 total amount of contributions deferred shall be repaid no later than June 30, 2022.

90 (f) All contributions deferred pursuant to subsection (b) or (d) shall be repaid with interest to the
91 applicable defined benefit retirement plan within the ten-year period immediately following the last day
92 of the fiscal year in which the deferral occurred. The amount repaid each fiscal year shall not be less
93 than one-tenth of the total contributions deferred in the year of deferral until the total amount of
94 contributions deferred in the year of deferral have been repaid. The annual interest rate shall be equal
95 to the current actuarially calculated long-term rate of return for the defined benefit retirement plans
96 described in subdivision (1) of subsection (b).

97 (g) Nothing in this section shall be construed or interpreted to prohibit the funding of contributions
98 to defined benefit retirement plans established by the General Assembly at contribution rates that are
99 greater than the contribution rates recommended by the Board or any successor.

100 (h) The retirement system shall be subject to restrictions, terms, and conditions as may be prescribed
101 by the General Assembly.