

House Committee on Retirement

Minutes of Meeting
2020 Regular Session
May 7, 2020

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Lance Harris, chairman of the House Committee on Retirement, called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. in Room 1, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Lance Harris, chairman
Representative Roy Daryl Adams
Representative Tony Bacala
Representative Gerald "Beau" Beaulieu, IV, vice chairman
Representative Julie Emerson
Representative Michael "Gabe" Firment
Representative Aimee Adatto Freeman
Representative John R. Illg, Jr.
Representative Barry Ivey
Representative Richard James Nelson
Representative Phillip Eric Tarver

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Paul Hollis
Representative Patrick O. Jefferson

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tyler Bosworth, legislative analyst
Jennifer Watson, committee administrative assistant

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Angela McKnight, sergeant at arms

III. DISCUSSION OF LEGISLATION

House Bill No. 4 by Representative Bacala

Representative Bacala presented House Bill No. 4, which provides relative to the frequency of plan experience studies for the Parochial Employees' Retirement System of Louisiana.

Representative Bacala offered a motion to report House Bill No. 4 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 4 was reported favorably by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Adams, Bacala, Beaulieu, Emerson, Freeman, Firment, Illg, Ivey, Nelson, and Tarver voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 1 in support, and 1 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Statements submitted in accordance with House Rule 14.33 in lieu of appearing before the committee are as follows: 1 for information only. Copies of these statements are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 17 by Representative Bacala

Representative Bacala presented House Bill No. 17, which provides relative to entities that are employers covered by the Parochial Employees' Retirement System of Louisiana.

Representative Ivey offered a motion to report House Bill No. 17 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 17 was reported favorably by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Adams, Bacala, Beaulieu, Emerson, Freeman, Firment, Illg, Ivey, Nelson, and Tarver voted yea.

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House Bill No. 18 by Representative Bacala

Representative Bacala presented House Bill No. 18, which provides relative to contributions to and the administration of the Municipal Police Employees' Retirement System (MPERS).

Representative Bacala offered amendments to change the effective date of certain proposed law provisions relative to employer and employee contributions. Representative Bacala offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of

11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Adams, Bacala, Beaulieu, Emerson, Freeman, Firmment, Illg, Ivey, Nelson, and Tarver voted yea.

Ben Huxen, MPERS, 7722 Office Park Boulevard, Suite. 200, Baton Rouge, LA 70809, (225) 929-7411, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 18.

Gregory Curran, Louisiana Legislative Auditor, 10555 North Glenstone Place, Baton Rouge, LA 70810, (225) 769-4825, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 18.

Representative Ivey offered a motion to report House Bill No. 18 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 18 was reported with amendments by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Adams, Bacala, Beaulieu, Emerson, Freeman, Firmment, Illg, Ivey, Nelson, and Tarver voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 1 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 19 by Representative Bacala

Representative Bacala presented House Bill No. 19, which establishes a funding deposit account for the Municipal Police Employees' Retirement System (MPERS) and authorizes the board of trustees of the system to modify required employer contribution rates.

Representative Bacala offered amendments to:

1. Create a fund specifically for funding cost-of-living adjustments.
2. Change the percent by which MPERS can increase required employer contribution rates.

Representative Bacala offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Adams, Bacala, Beaulieu, Emerson, Freeman, Firmment, Illg, Ivey, Nelson, and Tarver voted yea.

Ben Huxen, MPERS, 7722 Office Park Boulevard, Suite 200, Baton Rouge, LA 70809, (225) 929-7411, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 19.

Representative Bacala offered a motion to report House Bill No. 19 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 19 was reported with amendments by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Adams, Bacala, Emerson, Freeman, Firmment, Illg, Ivey, Nelson, and Tarver voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 1 in support, and 1 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 21 by Representative Bacala

Representative Bacala presented House Bill No. 21, which provides relative to membership and benefits of the Municipal Police Employees' Retirement System (MPERS).

Representative Bacala offered amendments to:

1. Add changes to definitions of employee and employer.
2. Change deadline for application for survivor benefits from one year to three years after death.
3. Provide for suspension of retirement benefits of certain members who retire after July 1, 2021, and return to work rather than the reduction of retirement benefits for retirees who return to work.
4. Add authorization for withholdings from future benefits to recover benefits that were paid to persons to whom they were not due.
5. Add provision allowing a member who transfers service credit to pay for an upgrade in such service credit.

Representative Bacala offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Adams, Bacala, Beaulieu, Emerson, Freeman, Firment, Illg, Ivey, Nelson, and Tarver voted yea.

Ben Huxen, MPERS, 7722 Office Park Boulevard, Suite 200, Baton Rouge, LA 70809, (225) 284-6331, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 19.

Representative Beaulieu offered a motion to report House Bill No. 21 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 21 was reported with amendments by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Adams, Bacala, Beaulieu, Emerson, Freeman, Firment, Illg, Ivey, Nelson, and Tarver voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 1 in support, and 1 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Concurrent Resolution No. 9 by Representative Mike Johnson

Representative Mike Johnson presented House Concurrent Resolution No. 9, which memorializes Congress to support the Social Security Fairness Act.

Representative Bacala offered a motion to report House Concurrent Resolution No. 9 favorably. Without objection, House Concurrent Resolution No. 9 was reported favorably by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Adams, Bacala, Beaulieu, Emerson, Freeman, Firment, Illg, Ivey, Nelson, and Tarver voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 1 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Statements submitted in accordance with House Rule 14.33 in lieu of appearing before the committee are as follows: 3 in support. Copies of these statements are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 11 by Representative Carpenter

Representative Carpenter presented House Bill No. 11, which provides relative to benefit payments if an eligible member of the Firefighters' Retirement System dies prior to retirement.

Representative Bacala offered a motion to report House Bill No. 11 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 11 was reported favorably by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Adams, Bacala, Beaulieu, Emerson, Freeman, Firment, Illg, Ivey, Nelson, and Tarver voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 2 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 12 by Representative Carpenter

Representative Carpenter presented House Bill No. 12, which provides relative to the suspension of benefits of members of the Firefighters' Retirement System upon reemployment.

Chad Roberson, Louisiana Fire Chiefs Association, 3043 Old Forge Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, (225) 279-6752, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 12.

Steven Stockstill, no witness card submitted, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 12.

Gregory Curran, Louisiana Legislative Auditor, 10555 North Glenstone Place, Baton Rouge, LA 70810, (225) 769-4825, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 12.

Chad Major, Professional Firefighters Association, 8011 Merle Gustafson, Baton Rouge, LA, (225) 572-8483, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 12.

Representative Ivey offered a motion to report House Bill No. 12 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 12 was reported favorably by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Adams, Bacala, Beaulieu, Emerson, Firment, Freeman, Illg, Ivey, and Tarver voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 1 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 15 by Representative Coussan

Representative Coussan presented House Bill No. 15, which provides for membership of certain new hires of the Lafayette City-Parish Consolidated Government in the Parochial Employees' Retirement System (PERS) of Louisiana.

Senator Patrick Page Cortez, Louisiana Senate District 23, president of the Louisiana State Senate, spoke in support of House Bill No. 15.

Mayor-President Josh Guillory, Lafayette Consolidated Government, 705 West University Avenue, Lafayette, LA 70506, (337) 291-8300, spoke in support of House Bill No. 15.

Robert Benoit, Lafayette Consolidated Government, (337) 291-8328, spoke in support of House Bill No. 15.

Gregory Curran, Louisiana Legislative Auditor, 10555 North Glenstone Place, Baton Rouge, LA 70810, (225) 769-4825, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 15.

Michael Sands, Municipal Employees Retirement System (MERS), 7937 Office Park Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70809, (337) 344-2288, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 15.

Warren Ponder, 7937 Office Park Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70809, (225) 925-4810, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 15.

Representative Bacala offered amendments that require the Lafayette City-Parish Consolidated Government to remain liable for its share of the unfunded accrued liability for the Municipal Employees' Retirement System. Representative Bacala offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Representative Bacala withdrew his motion to adopt the proposed amendment.

Representative Bacala offered a motion to report House Bill No. 15 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 15 was reported favorably by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Adams, Beaulieu, Bacala, Tarver, Nelson, Ivey, Firment, and Emerson voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 3 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

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House Bill No. 13 by Representative Carpenter

Representative Carpenter presented House Bill No. 13, which provides relative to enrollment of employees in the Firefighters' Retirement System or the Municipal Police Employees' Retirement System.

Representative Bacala offered a motion to report House Bill No. 13 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 13 was reported favorably by a vote of 7 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Adams, Beaulieu, Bacala, Emerson, Firment, Nelson and voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 3 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 14 by Representative Carpenter

Representative Carpenter presented House Bill No. 14, which provides relative to the refund of employee contributions to the Firefighters' Retirement System.

Representative Bacala offered a motion to report House Bill No. 14 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 14 was reported favorably by a vote of 8 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Adams, Beaulieu, Bacala, Emerson, Firment, Ivey, and Nelson voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 2 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 8 by Representative Bourriaque

Representative Bourriaque presented House Bill No. 8, which provides relative to the rehire of retired teachers in the Teachers' Retirement System of Louisiana as substitute classroom teachers.

Representative Ivey offered amendments to:

1. Delete the proposed exception from the one-year limitation on retirees returning to work within 12 months of retirement.
2. Remove the population limit making proposed law applicable statewide.

Representative Ivey offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 8 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Adams, Bacala, Emerson, Firment, Ivey, Nelson, and Tarver voted yea.

Representative Ivey offered a motion to report House Bill No. 8 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 8 was reported with amendments by a vote of 8 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Adams, Bacala, Emerson, Firment, Ivey, Nelson, and Tarver voted yea.

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House Bill No. 10 by Representative Edmonds

Representative Edmonds presented House Bill No. 10, which provides relative to the calculation of average compensation of members of the Teachers' Retirement System of Louisiana.

Katherine Whitney, Teachers' Retirement System of Louisiana, 8401 United Plaza Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA, 70804, (225) 925-6119, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 10.

Representative Ivey offered a motion to involuntarily defer action on House Bill No. 10, to which Representative Bacala objected. No vote was taken on the motion.

Representative Bacala offered a substitute motion to report House Bill No. 10 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 10 was reported favorably by a vote of 8 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Adams, Bacala, Emerson, Firment, Ivey, Nelson, and Tarver voted yea.

House Resolution No. 21 by Representative Harris

Representative Harris presented House Resolution No. 21, which requests the state retirement systems to provide information to the legislature regarding permanent benefit increases for retirees.

Representative Tarver offered a motion to report House Resolution No. 21 favorably. Without objection, House Resolution No. 21 was reported favorably by a vote of 8 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Adams, Bacala, Emerson, Firment, Ivey, Nelson, and Tarver voted yea.

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IV. OTHER BUSINESS

Consideration and adoption of the minutes of 2019 Regular Session committee meetings held on April 25, May 2, May 8, May 22, and May 30, 2019

The minutes from the 2019 Regular Session dated April 25, May 2, May 8, May 22, and May 30 were presented to the committee for approval. Representative Ivey offered a motion to adopt the minutes. Without objection, the minutes were adopted by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Adams, Bacala, Beaulieu, Emerson, Freeman, Firment, Harris, Illg, Ivey, Nelson, and Tarver voted yea.

Consideration and adoption of committee rules

Representative Ivey offered a motion to adopt the current committee rules for the 2020-2024 legislative term. Without objection, the committee rules were adopted by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Adams, Bacala, Beaulieu, Emerson, Freeman, Firment, Harris, Illg, Ivey, Nelson, and Tarver voted yea.

Consideration of a letter from the office of the Louisiana Legislative Auditor regarding actuarial opinion

Chairman Harris read into the record a letter from the office of the Louisiana Legislative Auditor regarding actuarial opinion, Exhibit A, which is included in the committee records.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Lance Harris
House Committee on Retirement

Date adopted: