STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 46th Legislature (1997)

HOUSE BILL NO. 1291 By: Erwin

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to the Oklahoma Public Employees Retirement System; amending 74 O.S. 1991, Section 902, as last amended by Section 1, Chapter 302, O.S.L. 1995 (74 O.S. Supp. 1996, Section 902), which relates to definitions; modifying reference; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 74 O.S. 1991, Section 902, as last amended by Section 1, Chapter 302, O.S.L. 1995 (74 O.S. Supp. 1996, Section 902), is amended to read as follows:

Section 902. As used in this act:

(1) "System" means the Oklahoma Public Employees Retirement System as established by ~~this act and as it may hereafter be amended~~ law;

(2) "Accumulated contributions" means the sum of all contributions by a member to the System which shall be credited to the member's account;

(3) "Act" means Sections 901 to 932, inclusive, of this title;

(4) "Actuarial equivalent" means a deferred income benefit of equal value to the accumulated deposits or benefits when computed upon the basis of the actuarial tables in use by the System;

(5) "Actuarial tables" means the actuarial tables approved and in use by the Board at any given time;

(6) "Actuary" means the actuary or firm of actuaries employed by the Board at any given time;

(7) "Beneficiary" means any person named by a member to receive any benefits as provided for by this act. If there is no beneficiary living at time of member employee's death, his estate shall be the beneficiary;

(8) "Board" means the Oklahoma Public Employees Retirement System Board of Trustees;

(9) "Compensation" means all salary and wages, including amounts deferred under deferred compensation agreements entered into between a member and a participating employer, but exclusive of payment for overtime, payable to a member of the System for personal services performed for a participating employer, including maintenance, or any allowance in lieu thereof provided a member as a part of compensation but shall not include compensation or reimbursement for traveling, or moving expenses, or except as otherwise provided in this paragraph, any compensation in excess of the maximum compensation level, provided:

(a) For compensation for service prior to July 1, 1994, the maximum compensation level shall be Twenty-five Thousand Dollars ($25,000.00) per annum, unless the member made an election, in writing and filed with the System, to increase the member's maximum compensation level to Forty Thousand Dollars ($40,000.00) per annum. The election and payment of all contributions due must have been completed within three (3) years of the member's initial opportunity to increase the

compensation level. Any active member whose initial opportunity to make the election was on or after July 1, 1991, but no later than June 30, 1994, may make the election by filing the written election form with the System and paying the amount of contribution the member would have paid had the member made the election when initially eligible; provided, this election and payment must be completed no later than February 1, 1995.

(b) For compensation for service on or after July 1, 1994, through June 30, 1995, the maximum compensation level shall be Fifty Thousand Dollars ($50,000.00) per annum; for compensation for service on or after July 1, 1995, through June 30, 1996, the maximum compensation level shall be Sixty Thousand Dollars ($60,000.00) per annum; for compensation for service on or after July 1, 1996 through June 30, 1997, the maximum compensation level shall be Seventy Thousand Dollars ($70,000.00) per annum; and for compensation for service on or after July 1, 1997 through June 30, 1998, the maximum compensation level shall be Eighty Thousand Dollars ($80,000.00) per annum. For compensation for services on or after July 1, 1998, there shall be no maximum compensation level for retirement purposes.

(c) Any active member whose compensation exceeded Twenty-five Thousand Dollars ($25,000.00) prior to July 1, 1994, and who failed to make a timely election to increase the member's maximum compensation level pursuant to paragraph (a) of this subsection, may do so at any time prior to retirement. Any such member electing this maximum compensation level for service

prior to July 1, 1994, shall pay to the System a sum equal to the total amount of contributions that would have been required by the member had a timely election been made, plus seven and one-half percent (7.5%) interest compounded annually. Members so making this election may amortize the payments as provided in subsection B of Section 913.5 of this title.

(d) Compensation for retirement purposes shall include any amount of elective salary reduction under Section 457 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and any amount of non-elective salary reduction under Section 414(h) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

(e) A member who has voluntarily elected to increase the maximum compensation level pursuant to paragraph (a) of this subsection, upon retirement, shall be refunded, pursuant to procedures established by the Board, the employee contributions made on compensation which is in excess of the final average compensation of the member and was not used to determine the member's final average compensation;

(10) "Credited service" means the sum of participating service, prior service and elected service;

(11) "Dependent" means a parent, child, or spouse of a member who is dependent upon the member for at least one-half (1/2) of his support;

(12) "Effective date" means the date upon which the System becomes effective by operation of law;

(13) "Eligible employer" means the state and any county, county hospital, city or town, conservation districts, and any public or private trust in which a county, city or town participates and is the primary beneficiary is to be an eligible employer for the purpose of this act only, whose employees are covered by Social

Security and are not covered by or eligible for another retirement plan authorized under the laws of this state which is in operation on the initial entry date. Emergency medical service districts may join the System upon proper application to the Board. Provided affiliation by a county hospital shall be in the form of a resolution adopted by the board of control.

(a) If a class or several classes of employees of any above-defined employers are covered by Social Security and are not covered by or eligible for and will not become eligible for another retirement plan authorized under the laws of this state, which is in operation on the effective date, such employer shall be deemed an eligible employer, but only with respect to that class or those classes of employees as defined in this section.

(b) A class or several classes of employees who are covered by Social Security and are not covered by or eligible for and will not become eligible for another retirement plan authorized under the laws of this state, which is in operation on the effective date, and when the qualifications for employment in such class or classes are set by state law; and when such class or classes of employees are employed by county or municipal government pursuant to such qualifications; and when the services provided by such employees are of such nature that they qualify for matching by or contributions from state or federal funds administered by an agency of state government which qualifies as a participating employer, then the agency of state government administering the state or federal funds shall be deemed an eligible employer, but only with respect to that class or those classes

of employees as defined in this subsection; provided, that the required contributions to the retirement plan may be withheld from the contributions of state or federal funds administered by the state agency and transmitted to the System on the same basis as the employee and employer contributions are transmitted for the direct employees of the state agency. The retirement or eligibility for retirement under the provisions of law providing pensions for service as a volunteer fire fighter shall not render any person ineligible for participation in the benefits provided for in this act. An employee of any public or private trust in which a county, city or town participates and is the primary beneficiary shall be deemed to be an eligible employee for the purpose of this act only;

(14) "Employee" means any officer or employee of a participating employer, whose employment is not seasonal or temporary and whose employment requires at least one thousand (1,000) hours of work per year and whose salary or wage is equal to the hourly rate of the monthly minimum wage for state employees as provided in Section 284 of this title. For those eligible employers outlined in Section 910 of this title, the rate shall be equal to the hourly rate of the monthly minimum wage for that employer. Each employer, whose minimum wage is less than the state's minimum wage, shall inform the System of the minimum wage for that employer. This notification shall be by resolution of the governing body.

(a) Any employee of the county extension agents who is not currently participating in the Teachers' Retirement System shall be a member of this System.

(b) Eligibility shall not include any employee who is a contributing member of the United States Civil Service Retirement System.

(c) It shall be mandatory for an officer, appointee or employee of the office of district attorney to become a member of this System if he is not currently participating in a county retirement system. Provided further, that if an officer, appointee or employee of the office of district attorney is currently participating in such county retirement system, he is ineligible for this System as long as he is eligible for such county retirement system. Any eligible officer, appointee or employee of the office of district attorney shall be given credit for prior service as defined in this section. The provisions outlined in Section 917 of this title shall apply to those employees who have previously withdrawn their contributions.

(d) Eligibility shall also not include any officer or employee of the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission, except for those officers and employees of the Commission electing to transfer to this System pursuant to the provisions of Section 910.1 of this title or any other class of officers or employees specifically exempted by the laws of this state, unless there be a consolidation as provided by Section 912 of this title. Employees of the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission who are ineligible for enrollment in the Employment Security Commission Retirement Plan, that was in effect on January 1, 1964, shall become members of this System.

(e) Any employee employed by the Legislative Service Bureau, State Senate or House of Representatives for the full duration of a regular legislative session shall be eligible for membership in the System

regardless of classification as a temporary employee and may participate in the System during the regular legislative session at the option of the employee. For purposes of this subsection, the determination of whether an employee is employed for the full duration of a regular legislative session shall be made by the Legislative Service Bureau if such employee is employed by the Legislative Service Bureau, the State Senate if such employee is employed by the State Senate, or by the House of Representatives if such employee is employed by the House of Representatives. Once such an employee makes a choice to participate or not, the choice shall be binding for all future legislative sessions during which the employee is employed. Notwithstanding the previous sentence, any employee, who is eligible for membership in the System because of the provisions of this subsection and who was employed by the State Senate or House of Representatives after January 1, 1989, may file an election, in a manner specified by the Board, to participate as a member of the System prior to September 1, 1989. Each regular legislative session during which a legislative employee or an employee of the Legislative Service Bureau participates full time shall be counted as six (6) months of full-time participating service. Notwithstanding the provisions of this paragraph, a temporary legislative session employee who elected to become a member of the System may withdraw from the System effective the day said employee elected to participate in the System upon written request to the Board. Any such request must be received by the Board prior to October 1, 1990.

All employee contributions made by the temporary legislative session employee shall be returned to the employee without interest within four (4) months of receipt of the written request;

(15) "Entry date" means the date as of which an eligible employer joins the System. The first entry date pursuant to this act shall be January 1, 1964;

(16) "Executive Director" means the managing officer of the System employed by the Board under this act;

(17) "Final average compensation" means the average annual salary, including amounts deferred under deferred compensation agreements entered into between a member and a participating employer, up to, but not exceeding the maximum compensation levels as provided in subsection (9) of this section received as follows:

(a) for service rendered prior to July 1, 1994, the highest three (3) of the last ten (10) years of participating service immediately preceding retirement or termination of employment. Provided, no member shall retire with a final average compensation for service rendered prior to July 1, 1994, in excess of Forty Thousand Dollars ($40,000.00); and no member shall retire with a final average compensation for service rendered prior to July 1, 1994, in excess of Twenty-five Thousand Dollars ($25,000.00) unless the member has made the required election and has paid the required contributions on such salary in excess of Twenty-five Thousand Dollars ($25,000.00). In addition to those persons retiring on or after the effective date of this act, the provisions of this paragraph shall be applicable to those persons retiring on or after July 1, 1994, but not later than

July 1, 1995, unless such application would result in a reduction of retirement benefits for those persons;

(b) for service rendered after July 1, 1994, the highest three (3) of the last ten (10) years of participating service immediately preceding retirement or termination of employment, or if participating service is less than three (3) years, the full period of participating service after July 1, 1994. In addition to those persons retiring on or after the effective date of this act, the provisions of this paragraph shall be applicable to those persons retiring on or after July 1, 1994, but not later than July 1, 1995, unless such application would result in a reduction of retirement benefits for those persons; and

(c) the System shall, prior to January 1, 1996, pay to members retiring on or after July 1, 1994, and prior to July 1, 1995, any retroactive increase in benefits due pursuant to this paragraph;

(18) "Fiscal year" means the period commencing July 1 of any year and ending June 30 of the next year;

(19) "Fund" means the Oklahoma Public Employees Retirement Fund as created by this act;

(20) "Leave of absence" means a period of absence from employment without pay, authorized and approved by the employer and acknowledged to the Board, and which after the effective date does not exceed two (2) years;

(21) "Member" means an eligible employee or elected official who is in the System and is making the required employee or elected official contributions, or any former employee or elected official who shall have made the required contributions to the System and shall have not received a refund or withdrawal;

(22) "Military service" means service in the Armed Forces of the United States in time of war or national emergency, as defined in Section 67.13a of Title 72, from which the member was honorably discharged;

(23) "Normal retirement date" means the date on which a member may retire with full retirement benefits as provided in this act, such date being whichever occurs first:

(a) the first day of the month coinciding with or following a member's sixty-second birthday;

(b) for any person who initially became a member prior to July 1, 1992, the first day of the month coinciding with or following the date at which the sum of a member's age and number of years of credited service total eighty (80); such a normal retirement date will also apply to any person who became a member of the sending system as defined in this act, prior to July 1, 1992, regardless of whether there were breaks in service after July 1, 1992;

(c) for any person who became a member after June 30, 1992, the first day of the month coinciding with or following the date at which the sum of a member's age and number of years of credited service total ninety (90); or

(d) in addition to subparagraphs (a), (b) and (c) of this paragraph, the first day of the month coinciding with or following a member's fiftieth birthday if the member has at least twenty (20) years of full-time-equivalent employment as a correctional or probation and parole officer with the Department of Corrections and at the time of retirement, the member was a correctional or probation and parole officer with the Department of Corrections;

(24) "Participating employer" means an eligible employer who has agreed to make contributions to the System on behalf of its employees;

(25) "Participating service" means the period of employment after the entry date for which credit is granted a member;

(26) "Prior service" means the period of employment of a member by an eligible employer prior to his entry date for which credit is granted a member under this act;

(27) "Retirant" means a member who has retired under the System;

(28) "Retirement benefit" means a monthly income with benefits accruing from the first day of the month coinciding with or following retirement and ending on the last day of the month in which death occurs or the actuarial equivalent thereof paid in such manner as specified by the member pursuant to this act or as otherwise allowed to be paid at the discretion of the Board;

(29) "Retirement coordinator" means the individual designated by each participating employer through whom System transactions and communication shall be directed;

(30) "Social Security" means the old-age survivors and disability section of the Federal Social Security Act;

(31) "Total disability" means a physical or mental disability accepted for disability benefits by the Federal Social Security System;

(32) "Service-connected disability benefits" means military service benefits which are for a service-connected disability rated at twenty percent (20%) or more by the Veterans Administration or the Armed Forces of the United States;

(33) "Elected official" means a person elected to a state office in the legislative or executive branch of state government or a person elected to a county office for a definite number of years and shall include an individual who is appointed to fill the unexpired term of an elected state official;

(34) "Elected service" means the period of service as an elected official; and

(35) "Limitation year" means the year used in applying the limitations of Section 415 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, which year shall be the calendar year.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 1997.

SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

46-1-5059 MAH