

Committee on Governmental Oversight And Accountability

SB 7012 — Death Benefits Under the Florida Retirement System

by Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee and Senators Gardiner, Abruzzo, Altman, Bean, Benacquisto, Bradley, Brandes, Braynon, Bullard, Clemens, Dean, Detert, Diaz de la Portilla, Evers, Flores, Gaetz, Galvano, Garcia, Gibson, Grimsley, Hays, Hukill, Hutson, Joyner, Latvala, Lee, Legg, Margolis, Montford, Negron, Richter, Ring, Sachs, Simmons, Simpson, Smith, Sobel, Soto, Stargel, and Thompson

This bill primarily makes two changes to the Florida Retirement System (FRS). First, the bill increases the monthly survivor benefits available to the spouses and children of FRS pension plan members in the Special Risk Class when killed in the line of duty from 50 percent of the member's monthly salary at the time of death to 100 percent of the member's monthly salary at the time of death. These new benefits are funded through additional employer-paid contributions relating to the FRS pension plan.

Second, the bill permits the surviving spouse or children of an investment plan member in the Special Risk Class when killed in the line of duty to opt into the FRS investment plan survivor benefits program in lieu of receiving normal retirement benefits under the FRS investment plan. By participating in the survivor benefits program, the surviving spouse and children are eligible to receive annuitized benefits much like the survivor benefits (described above) afforded to Special Risk Class members of the FRS pension plan. The investment plan survivor benefits program is funded by additional employer-paid contributions to the survivor benefits account of the FRS Trust Fund.

The new survivor benefits established by this bill are available to members in the Special Risk Class when killed in the line of duty on or after July 1, 2013.

The contributions paid into the FRS by employers participating in the FRS are increased by \$25 million annually. The bill appropriates the recurring amounts of \$5,445,337 from the General Revenue Fund and \$1,062,991 from trust funds to Administered Funds, to fund the increased employer contribution rates to be paid under the bill by state agencies, state universities, state colleges, and school districts.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2016.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 116-1