

LEGISLATIVE BILL 126

Approved by the Governor February 26, 2015

Introduced by Nordquist, 7.

A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to retirement; to amend section 23-1118, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2014; to change the applicability of certain county retirement provisions; to change a combined contribution rate as prescribed; to provide for an irrevocable election regarding future contributions; and to repeal the original section.
Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

Section 1. Section 23-1118, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2014, is amended to read:

23-1118 (1)(a) Unless the county has adopted a retirement system pursuant to section 23-2329, the county board of any county having a population of one hundred fifty thousand inhabitants or more, as determined by the most recent federal decennial census, may, in its discretion and with the approval of the voters, provide retirement benefits for present and future employees of the county. The cost of such retirement benefits shall be funded in accordance with sound actuarial principles with the necessary cost being treated in the county budget in the same way as any other operating expense.

(b) Except as provided in subdivision (c) of this subsection, each employee shall be required to contribute, or have contributed on his or her behalf, an amount at least equal to the county's contribution to the cost of any such retirement program as to service performed after the adoption of such retirement program, but the cost of any benefits based on prior service shall be borne solely by the county.

(c) In a county or municipal county having a population of two hundred fifty thousand or more inhabitants but not more than five ~~three~~ hundred thousand inhabitants, as determined by the most recent federal decennial census, the county or municipal county shall establish the employee and employer contribution rates to the retirement program for each year after July 15, 1992. The county or municipal county shall contribute one hundred fifty percent of each employee's mandatory contribution, and for an employee hired on or after July 1, 2012, the county or municipal county shall contribute at least one hundred percent of each such employee's mandatory contribution, except that an employee receiving a one hundred fifty percent employer contribution under this subdivision may irrevocably elect to switch to a one hundred percent contribution for all future contributions. The combined contributions of the county or municipal county and its employees to the cost of any such retirement program shall not exceed sixteen ~~thirteen~~ percent of the employees' salaries.

(2) Before the county board or council provides retirement benefits for the employees of the county or municipal county, such question shall be submitted at a regular general or primary election held within the county or municipal county, and in which election all persons eligible to vote for the officials of the county or municipal county shall be entitled to vote on such question, which shall be submitted in the following language: Shall the county board or council provide retirement benefits for present and future employees of the county or municipal county? If a majority of the votes cast upon such question are in favor of such question, then the county board or council shall be empowered to provide retirement benefits for present and future employees as provided in this section. If such retirement benefits for present and future county and municipal county employees are approved by the voters and authorized by the county board or council, then the funds of such retirement system, in excess of the amount required for current operations as determined by the county board or council, may be invested and reinvested in the class of securities and investments described in section 30-3209.

(3) As used in this section, employees shall mean all persons or officers devoting more than twenty hours per week to employment by the county or municipal county, all elected officers of the county or municipal county, and such other persons or officers as are classified from time to time as permanent employees by the county board or council.

(4) The county or municipal county may pick up the member contributions required by this section for all compensation paid on or after January 1, 1985, and the contributions so picked up shall be treated as employer contributions in determining federal tax treatment under the Internal Revenue Code, except that the county or municipal county shall continue to withhold federal income taxes based upon these contributions until the Internal Revenue Service or the federal courts rule that, pursuant to section 414(h) of the Internal Revenue Code, these contributions shall not be included as gross income of the member until such time as they are distributed or made available. The county or municipal county shall pay these member contributions from the same source of funds which is used in paying earnings to the member. The county or municipal county shall pick up these contributions by a salary deduction either through a reduction in the cash salary of the member or a combination of a reduction in salary and offset against a future salary increase. Member contributions picked up shall be treated in the same manner and to the same extent as member

contributions made prior to the date picked up.

(5)(a) Beginning December 31, 1998, and each December 31 thereafter, the chairperson of the county board or council with a retirement plan established pursuant to this section and section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code shall file with the Public Employees Retirement Board a report on such plan and shall submit copies of such report to the Auditor of Public Accounts. The Auditor of Public Accounts may prepare a review of such report pursuant to section 84-304.02 but is not required to do so. The report shall be in a form prescribed by the Public Employees Retirement Board and shall contain the following information for each such retirement plan:

- (i) The number of persons participating in the retirement plan;
- (ii) The contribution rates of participants in the plan;
- (iii) Plan assets and liabilities;
- (iv) The names and positions of persons administering the plan;
- (v) The names and positions of persons investing plan assets;
- (vi) The form and nature of investments;
- (vii) For each defined contribution plan, a full description of investment policies and options available to plan participants; and
- (viii) For each defined benefit plan, the levels of benefits of participants in the plan, the number of members who are eligible for a benefit, and the total present value of such members' benefits, as well as the funding sources which will pay for such benefits.

If a plan contains no current active participants, the chairperson may file in place of such report a statement with the Public Employees Retirement Board indicating the number of retirees still drawing benefits, and the sources and amount of funding for such benefits.

(b) If such retirement plan is a defined benefit plan which was open to new members on January 1, 2004, in addition to the reports required by section 13-2402, the county board of a county or council of the municipal county with a retirement plan established pursuant to this section shall cause to be prepared an annual report and the chairperson shall file the same with the Public Employees Retirement Board and the Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee of the Legislature and submit to the Auditor of Public Accounts a copy of such report. The Auditor of Public Accounts may prepare a review of such report pursuant to section 84-304.02 but is not required to do so. If the county board or council does not submit a copy of the report to the Auditor of Public Accounts within six months after the end of the plan year, the Auditor of Public Accounts may audit, or cause to be audited, the county or municipal county. All costs of the audit shall be paid by the county or municipal county. The report shall consist of a full actuarial analysis of each such retirement plan established pursuant to this section. The analysis shall be prepared by an independent private organization or public entity employing actuaries who are members in good standing of the American Academy of Actuaries, and which organization or entity has demonstrated expertise to perform this type of analysis and is unrelated to any organization offering investment advice or which provides investment management services to the retirement plan. The report to the Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee shall be submitted electronically.

Sec. 2. Original section 23-1118, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2014, is repealed.