

LEGISLATIVE BILL 40

Approved by the Governor February 26, 2015

Introduced by Nordquist, 7.

A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to retirement; to amend sections 16-1019, 16-1038, 23-2305.01, 23-2322, 24-704.01, 79-904.01, 79-948, 79-9,104, 81-2019.01, 81-2032, 84-1305.02, 84-1324, 84-1503, and 84-1505, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, and sections 14-2111, 24-710.02, and 48-1401, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2014; to eliminate unconstitutional provisions related to payment of benefits or annuities for civil damages; to grant the Public Employees Retirement Board certain investigative powers; and to repeal the original sections.

Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

Section 1. Section 14-2111, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2014, is amended to read:

14-2111 (1) The board of directors of any metropolitan utilities district may also provide benefits for, insurance of, and annuities for the present and future employees and appointees of the district covering accident, disease, death, total and permanent disability, and retirement, all or any of them, under such terms and conditions as the board may deem proper and expedient from time to time. Any retirement plan adopted by the board of directors shall be upon some contributory basis requiring contributions by both the district and the employee or appointee, except that the district may pay the entire cost of the fund necessary to cover service rendered prior to the adoption of any new retirement plan. Any retirement plan shall take into consideration the benefits provided for employees and appointees of metropolitan utilities districts under the Social Security Act, and any benefits provided under a contributory retirement plan shall be supplemental to the benefits provided under the Social Security Act as defined in section 68-602 if the employees entitled to vote in a referendum vote in favor of old age and survivors' insurance coverage. To effectuate any plan adopted pursuant to this authority, the board of directors of the district is empowered to establish and maintain reserves and funds, provide for insurance premiums and costs, and make such delegation as may be necessary to carry into execution the general powers granted by this section. ~~Payments Except as provided in subsection (4) of this section, payments made to employees and appointees, under the authority in this section, shall be exempt from attachment or other legal process and shall not be assignable.~~

(2) Any retirement plan adopted by the board of directors of any metropolitan utilities district may allow the district to pick up the employee contribution required by this section for all compensation paid on or after January 1, 1986, 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 employer shall continue to withhold federal income taxes based upon such contributions until the Internal Revenue Service or the federal courts rule that, pursuant to section 414(h) of the Internal Revenue Code, such contributions shall not be included as gross income of the employee until such time as they are distributed or made available. The employer shall pay the employee contributions from the same source of funds which is used in paying earnings to the employees. The employer shall pick up the contributions by a salary deduction either through a reduction in the cash salary of the employee or a combination of a reduction in salary and offset against a future salary increase. Employee contributions picked up shall be treated in the same manner and to the same extent as employee contributions made prior to the date picked up.

(3)(a) Beginning December 31, 1998, and each December 31 thereafter, the chairperson of the board shall file with the Public Employees Retirement Board an annual report on each retirement plan established pursuant to this section and section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code 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 annual 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 board of directors of any metropolitan utilities district shall cause to be prepared an annual report and 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 board of directors 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 metropolitan utilities district. All costs of the audit shall be paid by the metropolitan utilities district. 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.

~~(4) If an employee or appointee is convicted of or pleads no contest to a felony that is defined as assault, sexual assault, kidnapping, child abuse, false imprisonment, or theft by embezzlement and is found liable for civil damages as a result of such felony, following distribution of the employee's or appointee's benefits or annuities from the retirement plan, the court may order the payment of the employee's or appointee's benefits or annuities under the retirement plan for such civil damages, except that the benefits or annuities to the extent reasonably necessary for the support of the employee or appointee or any of his or her beneficiaries shall be exempt from such payment. Any order for payment of benefits or annuities shall not be stayed on the filing of any appeal of the conviction. If the conviction is reversed on final judgment, all benefits or annuities paid as civil damages shall be forfeited and returned to the employee or appointee. The changes made to this section by Laws 2012, LB916, shall apply to persons convicted of or who have pled no contest to such a felony and who have been found liable for civil damages as a result of such felony prior to, on, or after April 7, 2012.~~

Sec. 2. Section 16-1019, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

16-1019 (1) ~~The~~ Except as provided in subsection (6) of this section, the right to any benefits under the retirement system and the assets of any fund of the retirement system shall not be assignable or subject to execution, garnishment, attachment, or the operation of any bankruptcy or insolvency laws, except that the retirement system may comply with the directions set forth in a qualified domestic relations order meeting the requirements of section 414(p) of the Internal Revenue Code. ~~Any payment of benefits subject to such order shall take priority over any payment made pursuant to subsection (6) of this section.~~ The city or retirement committee may require appropriate releases from any person as a condition to complying with any such order. The retirement system shall not recognize any domestic relations order which alters or changes benefits, provides for a form of benefit not otherwise provided for by the retirement system, increases benefits not otherwise provided by the retirement system, or accelerates or defers the time of payment of benefits. No participant or beneficiary shall have any right to any specific portion of the assets of the retirement system.

(2) The retirement system shall be administered in a manner necessary to comply with the tax-qualification requirements applicable to government retirement plans under section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, including section 401(a)(9) relating to the time and manner in which benefits are required to be distributed and section 401(a)(9)(G) relating to incidental death benefit requirements, section 401(a)(16) relating to compliance with the maximum limitation on the plan benefits or contributions under section 415, section 401(a)(17) which limits the amount of compensation which can be taken into account under a retirement plan, section 401(a)(25) relating to the specification of actuarial assumptions, section 401(a)(31) relating to direct rollover distributions from eligible retirement plans, and section 401(a)(37) relating to the death benefit of a police officer who dies while performing qualified military service. Any requirements for compliance with section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code may be set forth in any trust or funding medium for the retirement system. This subsection shall be in full force and effect only so long as conformity with section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code is required for public retirement systems in order to secure the favorable income tax treatment extended to sponsors and beneficiaries of tax-qualified retirement plans.

(3) If the retirement committee determines that the retirement system has previously overpaid or underpaid a benefit payable under the Police Officers Retirement Act, it shall have the power to correct such error. In the event of an overpayment, the retirement system may, in addition to any other remedy that the retirement system may possess, offset future benefit payments by the amount of the prior overpayment, together with regular interest thereon.

(4) A police officer whose benefit payment is adjusted by the retirement committee pursuant to subsection (3) of this section may request a review by the city council of the adjustment made by the retirement committee.

(5) In order to provide the necessary amounts to pay for or fund a pension plan established under the act, the mayor and council may make a levy which is within the levy restrictions of section 77-3442.

~~(6) If a member of the retirement system is convicted of or pleads no contest to a felony that is defined as assault, sexual assault, kidnapping, child abuse, false imprisonment, or theft by embezzlement and is found liable for civil damages as a result of such felony, following distribution of the member's benefits or the assets of any fund of the member from the retirement system, the court may order the payment of the member's benefits or the assets of any fund of the member under the retirement system for such civil damages, except that the benefits or assets to the extent reasonably necessary for the support of the member or any of his or her beneficiaries shall be exempt from such payment. Any order for payment of benefits or assets shall not be stayed on the filing of any appeal of the conviction. If the conviction is reversed on final judgment, all benefits or assets paid as civil damages shall be forfeited and returned to the member. The changes made to this section by Laws 2012, LB916, shall apply to persons convicted of or who have pled no contest to such a felony and who have been found liable for civil damages as a result of such felony prior to, on, or after April 7, 2012.~~

Sec. 3. Section 16-1038, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

16-1038 (1) ~~The~~ Except as provided in subsection (6) of this section, the right to any benefits under the retirement system and the assets of any fund of the retirement system shall not be assignable or subject to execution, garnishment, attachment, or the operation of any bankruptcy or insolvency laws, except that the retirement system may comply with the directions set forth in a qualified domestic relations order meeting the requirements of section 414(p) of the Internal Revenue Code. Any payment of benefits subject to such order shall take priority over any payment made pursuant to subsection (6) of this section. The city or retirement committee may require appropriate releases from any person as a condition to complying with any such order. The retirement system shall not recognize any domestic relations order which alters or changes benefits, provides for a form of benefit not otherwise provided for by the retirement system, increases benefits not otherwise provided by the retirement system, or accelerates or defers the time of payment of benefits. No participant or beneficiary shall have any right to any specific portion of the assets of the retirement system.

(2) The retirement system shall be administered in a manner necessary to comply with the tax-qualification requirements applicable to government retirement plans under section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, including section 401(a)(9) relating to the time and manner in which benefits are required to be distributed and section 401(a)(9)(G) relating to incidental death benefit requirements, section 401(a)(16) relating to compliance with the maximum limitation on the plan benefits or contributions under section 415, section 401(a)(17) which limits the amount of compensation which can be taken into account under a retirement plan, section 401(a)(25) relating to the specification of actuarial assumptions, section 401(a)(31) relating to direct rollover distribution from eligible retirement plans, and section 401(a)(37) relating to the death benefit of a firefighter who dies while performing qualified military service. Any requirements for compliance with section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code may be set forth in any trust or funding medium for the retirement system. This subsection shall be in full force and effect only so long as conformity with section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code is required for public retirement systems in order to secure the favorable income tax treatment extended to sponsors and beneficiaries of tax-qualified retirement plans.

(3) If the retirement committee determines that the retirement system has previously overpaid or underpaid a benefit payable under sections 16-1020 to 16-1042, it shall have the power to correct such error. In the event of an overpayment, the retirement system may, in addition to any other remedy that the retirement system may possess, offset future benefit payments by the amount of the prior overpayment, together with regular interest thereon.

(4) A firefighter whose benefit payment is adjusted by the retirement committee pursuant to subsection (3) of this section may request a review by the city council of the adjustment made by the retirement committee.

(5) In order to provide the necessary amounts to pay for or fund a pension plan established under sections 16-1020 to 16-1042, the mayor and council may make a levy which is within the levy restrictions of section 77-3442.

~~(6) If a member of the retirement system is convicted of or pleads no contest to a felony that is defined as assault, sexual assault, kidnapping, child abuse, false imprisonment, or theft by embezzlement and is found liable for civil damages as a result of such felony, following distribution of the member's benefits or the assets of any fund of the member from the retirement system, the court may order the payment of the member's benefits or the assets of any fund of the member under the retirement system for such civil damages, except that the benefits or assets to the extent reasonably necessary for the support of the member or any of his or her beneficiaries shall be exempt from such payment. Any order for payment of benefits or assets shall not be stayed on the filing of any appeal of the conviction. If the conviction is reversed on final judgment, all benefits or assets paid as civil damages shall be forfeited~~

~~and returned to the member. The changes made to this section by Laws 2012, LB916, shall apply to persons convicted of or who have pled no contest to such a felony and who have been found liable for civil damages as a result of such felony prior to, on, or after April 7, 2012.~~

Sec. 4. Section 23-2305.01, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

23-2305.01 (1)(a) If the board determines that the retirement system has previously received contributions or distributed benefits which for any reason are not in accordance with the statutory provisions of the County Employees Retirement Act, the board shall refund contributions, require additional contributions, adjust benefits, credit dividend amounts, or require repayment of benefits paid. In the event of an overpayment of a benefit, the board may, in addition to other remedies, offset future benefit payments by the amount of the prior overpayment, together with regular interest or interest credits, whichever is appropriate, thereon. In the event of an underpayment of a benefit, the board shall immediately make payment equal to the deficit amount plus regular interest or interest credits, whichever is appropriate.

(b) The board shall have the power, through the director of the Nebraska Public Employees Retirement Systems or the director's designee, to make a thorough investigation of any overpayment of a benefit, when in the judgment of the retirement system such investigation is necessary, including, but not limited to, circumstances in which benefit payments are made after the death of a member or beneficiary and the retirement system is not made aware of such member's or beneficiary's death. In connection with any such investigation, the board, through the director or the director's designee, shall have the power to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of books, papers, records, and documents, whether in hardcopy, electronic form, or otherwise, and issue subpoenas for such purposes. Such subpoenas shall be served in the same manner and have the same effect as subpoenas from district courts.

(2) The board shall adopt and promulgate rules and regulations implementing this section, which shall include, but not be limited to, the following: (a) The procedures for refunding contributions, adjusting future contributions or benefit payments, and requiring additional contributions or repayment of benefits; (b) the process for a member, member's beneficiary, employee, or employer to dispute an adjustment of contributions or benefits; and (c) notice provided to all affected persons. All notices shall be sent prior to an adjustment and shall describe the process for disputing an adjustment of contributions or benefits.

Sec. 5. Section 23-2322, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

23-2322 Annuities ~~(1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, annuities or benefits which any person shall be entitled to receive under the County Employees Retirement Act shall not be subject to garnishment, attachment, levy, the operation of bankruptcy or insolvency laws, or any other process of law whatsoever and shall not be assignable except to the extent that such annuities or benefits are subject to a qualified domestic relations order under the Spousal Pension Rights Act. The payment of any annuities or benefits subject to such order shall take priority over any payment made pursuant to subsection (2) of this section.~~

~~(2) If a member of the retirement system is convicted of or pleads no contest to a felony that is defined as assault, sexual assault, kidnapping, child abuse, false imprisonment, or theft by embezzlement and is found liable for civil damages as a result of such felony, following distribution of the member's annuities or benefits from the retirement system, the court may order the payment of the member's annuities or benefits under the retirement system for such civil damages, except that the annuities or benefits to the extent reasonably necessary for the support of the member or any of his or her beneficiaries shall be exempt from such payment. Any order for payment of annuities or benefits shall not be stayed on the filing of any appeal of the conviction. If the conviction is reversed on final judgment, all annuities or benefits paid as civil damages shall be forfeited and returned to the member. The changes made to this section by Laws 2012, LB916, shall apply to persons convicted of or who have pled no contest to such a felony and who have been found liable for civil damages as a result of such felony prior to, on, or after April 7, 2012.~~

Sec. 6. Section 24-704.01, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

24-704.01 (1)(a) If the board determines that the retirement system has previously received contributions or distributed benefits which for any reason are not in accordance with the Judges Retirement Act, the board shall refund contributions, require additional contributions, adjust benefits, or require repayment of benefits paid. In the event of an overpayment of a benefit, the board may, in addition to other remedies, offset future benefit payments by the amount of the prior overpayment, together with regular interest thereon. In the event of an underpayment of a benefit, the board shall immediately make payment equal to the deficit amount plus regular interest.

(b) The board shall have the power, through the director of the Nebraska Public Employees Retirement Systems or the director's designee, to make a thorough investigation of any overpayment of a benefit, when in the judgment of the retirement system such investigation is necessary, including, but not limited to, circumstances in which benefit payments are made after the death of a member or beneficiary and the retirement system is not made aware of such member's or beneficiary's death. In connection with any such investigation, the

board, through the director or the director's designee, shall have the power to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of books, papers, records, and documents, whether in hardcopy, electronic form, or otherwise, and issue subpoenas for such purposes. Such subpoenas shall be served in the same manner and have the same effect as subpoenas from district courts.

(2) The board shall adopt and promulgate rules and regulations implementing this section, which shall include, but not be limited to, the following: (a) The procedures for refunding contributions, adjusting future contributions or benefit payments, and requiring additional contributions or repayment of benefits; (b) the process for a member, member's beneficiary, employee, or employer to dispute an adjustment of contributions or benefits; and (c) notice provided to all affected persons. All notices shall be sent prior to an adjustment and shall describe the process for disputing an adjustment of contributions or benefits.

Sec. 7. Section 24-710.02, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2014, is amended to read:

24-710.02 ~~All~~ (1) ~~Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, all annuities or benefits which any person shall be entitled to receive under the Judges Retirement Act shall not be subject to garnishment, attachment, levy, the operation of bankruptcy or insolvency laws, or any other process of law whatsoever and shall not be assignable except to the extent that such annuities or benefits are subject to a qualified domestic relations order under the Spousal Pension Rights Act. The payment of any annuities or benefits subject to such order shall take priority over any payment made pursuant to subsection (2) of this section.~~

~~(2) If a member of the retirement system is convicted of or pleads no contest to a felony that is defined as assault, sexual assault, kidnapping, child abuse, false imprisonment, or theft by embezzlement and is found liable for civil damages as a result of such felony, following distribution of the member's annuities or benefits from the retirement system, the court may order the payment of the member's annuities or benefits under the retirement system for such civil damages, except that the annuities or benefits to the extent reasonably necessary for the support of the member or any of his or her beneficiaries shall be exempt from such payment. Any order for payment of annuities or benefits shall not be stayed on the filing of any appeal of the conviction. If the conviction is reversed on final judgment, all annuities or benefits paid as civil damages shall be forfeited and returned to the member. The changes made to this section by Laws 2012, LB916, shall apply to persons convicted of or who have pled no contest to such a felony and who have been found liable for civil damages as a result of such felony prior to, on, or after April 7, 2012.~~

Sec. 8. Section 48-1401, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2014, is amended to read:

48-1401 (1) Any county, municipality, or other political subdivision, instrumentality, or agency of the State of Nebraska, except any agency subject to sections 84-1504 to 84-1506 or section 85-106, 85-320, or 85-606.01, may enter into an agreement to defer a portion of any individual's compensation derived from such county, municipality, or other political subdivision, instrumentality, or agency to a future period in time pursuant to section 457 of the Internal Revenue Code. Such deferred compensation plan shall be voluntary and shall be available to all regular employees and elected officials.

(2) The compensation to be deferred may never exceed the total compensation to be received by the individual from the employer or exceed the limits established by the Internal Revenue Code for such a plan.

(3) All compensation deferred under the plan, all property and rights purchased with the deferred compensation, and all investment income attributable to the deferred compensation, property, or rights shall be held in trust for the exclusive benefit of participants and their beneficiaries by the county, municipality, or other political subdivision, instrumentality, or agency until such time as payments are made under the terms of the deferred compensation plan.

(4) The county, municipality, or other political subdivision, instrumentality, or agency shall designate its treasurer or an equivalent official, including the State Treasurer, to be the custodian of the funds and securities of the deferred compensation plan.

(5) The county, municipality, or other political subdivision, instrumentality, or agency may invest the compensation to be deferred under an agreement in or with: (a) Annuities; (b) mutual funds; (c) banks; (d) savings and loan associations; (e) trust companies qualified to act as fiduciaries in this state; (f) an organization established for the purpose of administering public employee deferred compensation retirement plans and authorized to do business in the State of Nebraska; or (g) investment advisers as defined in the federal Investment Advisers Act of 1940.

(6) The deferred compensation program shall exist and serve in addition to, and shall not be a part of, any existing retirement or pension system provided for state, county, municipal, or other political subdivision, instrumentality, or agency employees, or any other benefit program.

(7) Any compensation deferred under such a deferred compensation plan shall continue to be included as regular compensation for the purpose of computing the retirement, pension, or social security contributions made or benefits earned by any employee.

(8) Any sum so deferred shall not be included in the computation of any

federal or state taxes withheld on behalf of any such individual.

(9) The state, county, municipality, or other political subdivision, instrumentality, or agency shall not be responsible for any investment results entered into by the individual in the deferred compensation agreement.

~~(10) All (a) Except as provided in subdivision (b) of this subsection, all compensation deferred under the plan, all property and rights purchased with the deferred compensation, and all investment income attributable to the deferred compensation, property, or rights shall not be subject to garnishment, attachment, levy, the operation of bankruptcy or insolvency laws, or any other process of law whatsoever and shall not be assignable.~~

~~(b) If a participant in the deferred compensation plan is convicted of or pleads no contest to a felony that is defined as assault, sexual assault, kidnapping, child abuse, false imprisonment, or theft by embezzlement and is found liable for civil damages as a result of such felony, following distribution of the participant's compensation deferred under the plan, property and rights purchased with the deferred compensation, or investment income attributable to the deferred compensation, property, or rights from the plan, the court may order the payment of such compensation, property and rights, or investment income for such civil damages, except that the compensation, property and rights, or investment income to the extent reasonably necessary for the support of the participant or any of his or her beneficiaries shall be exempt from such payment. Any order for payment of compensation, property and rights, or investment income shall not be stayed on the filing of any appeal of the conviction. If the conviction is reversed on final judgment, all compensation, property and rights, or investment income paid as civil damages shall be forfeited and returned to the participant. The changes made to this section by Laws 2012, LB916, shall apply to persons convicted of or who have pled no contest to such a felony and who have been found liable for civil damages as a result of such felony prior to, on, or after April 7, 2012.~~

(11) Nothing contained in this section shall in any way limit, restrict, alter, amend, invalidate, or nullify any deferred compensation plan previously instituted by any county, municipality, or other political subdivision, instrumentality, or agency of the State of Nebraska, and any such plan is hereby authorized and approved.

(12) If a county has not established a deferred compensation plan pursuant to this section, each individual may require that the county enter into an agreement with the individual to defer a portion of such individual's compensation and place it under the management and supervision of the state deferred compensation plan created pursuant to sections 84-1504 to 84-1506. If such an agreement is made, the county shall designate the State Treasurer as custodian of such deferred compensation funds and such deferred compensation funds shall become a part of the trust administered by the Public Employees Retirement Board pursuant to sections 84-1504 to 84-1506.

(13) For purposes of this section, individual means (a) any person designated by the county, municipality, or other political subdivision, instrumentality, or agency of the State of Nebraska, except any agency subject to sections 84-1504 to 84-1506 or section 85-106, 85-320, or 85-606.01, as a permanent part-time or full-time employee of the county, municipality, or other political subdivision, instrumentality, or agency and (b) a person under contract providing services to the county, municipality, or other political subdivision, instrumentality, or agency of the State of Nebraska, except any agency subject to sections 84-1504 to 84-1506 or section 85-106, 85-320, or 85-606.01, and who has entered into a contract with such county, municipality, political subdivision, instrumentality, or agency to have compensation deferred prior to August 28, 1999.

Sec. 9. Section 79-904.01, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

79-904.01 (1)(a) If the board determines that the retirement system has previously received contributions or distributed benefits which for any reason are not in accordance with the statutory provisions of the School Employees Retirement Act, the board may refund contributions, require additional contributions, adjust benefits, or require repayment of benefits paid. In the event of an overpayment of a benefit, the board may, in addition to other remedies, offset future benefit payments by the amount of the prior overpayment, together with regular interest thereon. In the event of a material underpayment of a benefit, the board shall immediately make payment equal to the deficit amount plus regular interest.

(b) The board shall have the power, through the director of the Nebraska Public Employees Retirement Systems or the director's designee, to make a thorough investigation of any overpayment of a benefit, when in the judgment of the retirement system such investigation is necessary, including, but not limited to, circumstances in which benefit payments are made after the death of a member or beneficiary and the retirement system is not made aware of such member's or beneficiary's death. In connection with any such investigation, the board, through the director or the director's designee, shall have the power to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of books, papers, records, and documents, whether in hardcopy, electronic form, or otherwise, and issue subpoenas for such purposes. Such subpoenas shall be served in the same manner and have the same effect as subpoenas from district courts.

(2) If the board determines that termination of employment has not occurred and a retirement benefit has been paid to a member of the retirement system pursuant to section 79-933, such member shall repay the benefit to the

retirement system.

(3) The board shall adopt and promulgate rules and regulations implementing this section, which shall include, but not be limited to, the following: (a) The procedures for refunding contributions, adjusting future contributions or benefit payments, and requiring additional contributions or repayment of benefits; (b) the process for a member, member's beneficiary, employee, or employer to dispute an adjustment of contributions or benefits; and (c) notice provided to all affected persons. All notices shall be sent at the time of or prior to an adjustment and shall describe the process for disputing an adjustment of contributions or benefits.

(4) The board shall not refund contributions made on compensation in excess of the limitations imposed by subdivision (35) of section 79-902.

Sec. 10. Section 79-948, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

~~79-948 The (1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, the right of a person to an annuity, an allowance, or any optional benefit under the School Employees Retirement Act, any other right accrued or accruing to any person or persons under such act, the various funds and account created thereby, and all the money, investments, and income thereof shall be exempt from any state, county, municipal, or other local tax, shall not be subject to execution, garnishment, attachment, the operation of bankruptcy or insolvency laws, or any other process of law whatsoever, and shall not be assignable except to the extent that such annuity, allowance, or benefit is subject to a qualified domestic relations order under the Spousal Pension Rights Act. The payment of any annuity, allowance, or benefit subject to such order shall take priority over any payment made pursuant to subsection (2) of this section.~~

~~(2) If a member of the retirement system is convicted of or pleads no contest to a felony that is defined as assault, sexual assault, kidnapping, child abuse, false imprisonment, or theft by embezzlement and is found liable for civil damages as a result of such felony, following distribution of the member's annuity, allowance, or optional benefit from the retirement system, the court may order the payment of such annuity, allowance, or optional benefit under the retirement system for such civil damages, except that the annuities, allowances, or optional benefits to the extent reasonably necessary for the support of the member or any of his or her beneficiaries shall be exempt from such payment. Any order for payment of annuities, allowances, or optional benefits shall not be stayed on the filing of any appeal of the conviction. If the conviction is reversed on final judgment, all annuities, allowances, or optional benefits paid as civil damages shall be forfeited and returned to the member. The changes made to this section by Laws 2012, LB916, shall apply to persons convicted of or who have pled no contest to such a felony and who have been found liable for civil damages as a result of such felony prior to, on, or after April 7, 2012.~~

Sec. 11. Section 79-9,104, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

~~79-9,104 (1) All Except as provided in subsection (4) of this section, all annuities and other benefits payable under the Class V School Employees Retirement Act and all accumulated credits of members of the retirement system shall not be assignable or subject to execution, garnishment, or attachment except to the extent that such annuity or benefit is subject to a qualified domestic relations order as such term is defined in and which meets the requirements of section 414(p) of the Internal Revenue Code. The payment of any annuity or benefit subject to such order shall take priority over any payment made pursuant to subsection (4) of this section. Payments under such a qualified domestic relations order shall be made only after the administrator of the retirement system receives written notice of such order and such additional information and documentation as the administrator may require.~~

~~(2) In lieu of the assignment of a member's future annuity or benefit to the member's spouse or former spouse, the retirement system shall permit the spouse or former spouse of a member to receive, pursuant to a qualified domestic relations order, a single sum payment of a specified percentage of the member's accumulated contributions on the condition that upon the payment of such amount the spouse or former spouse shall have no further interest in the retirement system or in the remaining benefit of the member under the retirement system.~~

~~(3) A member's interest and benefits under the retirement system shall be reduced, either at termination of employment, retirement, disability, or death, by the actuarial value of the benefit assigned or paid to the member's spouse, former spouse, or other dependents under a qualified domestic relations order, as determined by the plan actuary on the basis of the actuarial assumptions then recommended by the actuary pursuant to section 79-984.~~

~~(4) If a member of the retirement system is convicted of or pleads no contest to a felony that is defined as assault, sexual assault, kidnapping, child abuse, false imprisonment, or theft by embezzlement and is found liable for civil damages as a result of such felony, following distribution of the member's annuities or benefits from the retirement system, the court may order the payment of the member's annuities or benefits earned under the retirement system for such civil damages, except that the annuities or benefits to the extent reasonably necessary for the support of the member or any of his or her beneficiaries shall be exempt from such payment. Any order for payment of annuities or benefits shall not be stayed on the filing of any appeal of the conviction. If the conviction is reversed on final judgment, all annuities or benefits paid as civil damages shall be forfeited and returned to the member.~~

~~The changes made to this section by Laws 2012, LB916, shall apply to persons convicted of or who have pled no contest to such a felony and who have been found liable for civil damages as a result of such felony prior to, on, or after April 7, 2012.~~

Sec. 12. Section 81-2019.01, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

81-2019.01 (1)(a) If the board determines that the retirement system has previously received contributions or distributed benefits which for any reason are not in accordance with the statutory provisions of sections 81-2014 to 81-2036, the board shall refund contributions, require additional contributions, adjust benefits, or require repayment of benefits paid. In the event of an overpayment of a benefit, the board may, in addition to other remedies, offset future benefit payments by the amount of the prior overpayment, together with regular interest thereon. In the event of an underpayment of a benefit, the board shall immediately make payment equal to the deficit amount plus regular interest.

(b) The board shall have the power, through the director of the Nebraska Public Employees Retirement Systems or the director's designee, to make a thorough investigation of any overpayment of a benefit, when in the judgment of the retirement system such investigation is necessary, including, but not limited to, circumstances in which benefit payments are made after the death of a member or beneficiary and the retirement system is not made aware of such member's or beneficiary's death. In connection with any such investigation, the board, through the director or the director's designee, shall have the power to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of books, papers, records, and documents, whether in hardcopy, electronic form, or otherwise, and issue subpoenas for such purposes. Such subpoenas shall be served in the same manner and have the same effect as subpoenas from district courts.

(2) The board shall adopt and promulgate rules and regulations implementing this section, which shall include, but not be limited to, the following: (a) The procedures for refunding contributions, adjusting future contributions or benefit payments, and requiring additional contributions or repayment of benefits; (b) the process for a member, member's beneficiary, employee, or employer to dispute an adjustment of contributions or benefits; and (c) notice provided to all affected persons. All notices shall be sent prior to an adjustment and shall describe the process for disputing an adjustment of contributions or benefits.

Sec. 13. Section 81-2032, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

81-2032 ~~All (1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, all annuities or benefits which any person shall be entitled to receive under the Nebraska State Patrol Retirement Act sections 81-2014 to 81-2036 shall not be subject to garnishment, attachment, levy, the operation of bankruptcy or insolvency laws, or any other process of law whatsoever and shall not be assignable except to the extent that such annuities or benefits are subject to a qualified domestic relations order under the Spousal Pension Rights Act. The payment of any annuities or benefits subject to such order shall take priority over any payment made pursuant to subsection (2) of this section.~~

~~(2) If a member of the retirement system is convicted of or pleads no contest to a felony that is defined as assault, sexual assault, kidnapping, child abuse, false imprisonment, or theft by embezzlement and is found liable for civil damages as a result of such felony, following distribution of the member's annuities or benefits from the retirement system, the court may order the payment of the member's annuities or benefits under the retirement system for such civil damages, except that the annuities or benefits to the extent reasonably necessary for the support of the member or any of his or her beneficiaries shall be exempt from such payment. Any order for payment of annuities or benefits shall not be stayed on the filing of any appeal of the conviction. If the conviction is reversed on final judgment, all annuities or benefits paid as civil damages shall be forfeited and returned to the member. The changes made to this section by Laws 2012, LB916, shall apply to persons convicted of or who have pled no contest to such a felony and who have been found liable for civil damages as a result of such felony prior to, on, or after April 7, 2012.~~

Sec. 14. Section 84-1305.02, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

84-1305.02 (1)(a) If the board determines that the retirement system has previously received contributions or distributed benefits which for any reason are not in accordance with the statutory provisions of the State Employees Retirement Act, the board shall refund contributions, require additional contributions, adjust benefits, credit dividend amounts, or require repayment of benefits paid. In the event of an overpayment of a benefit, the board may, in addition to other remedies, offset future benefit payments by the amount of the prior overpayment, together with regular interest or interest credits, whichever is appropriate, thereon. In the event of an underpayment of a benefit, the board shall immediately make payment equal to the deficit amount plus regular interest or interest credits, whichever is appropriate.

(b) The board shall have the power, through the director of the Nebraska Public Employees Retirement Systems or the director's designee, to make a thorough investigation of any overpayment of a benefit, when in the judgment of the retirement system such investigation is necessary, including, but not limited to, circumstances in which benefit payments are made after the death of a member or beneficiary and the retirement system is not made aware of such

member's or beneficiary's death. In connection with any such investigation, the board, through the director or the director's designee, shall have the power to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of books, papers, records, and documents, whether in hardcopy, electronic form, or otherwise, and issue subpoenas for such purposes. Such subpoenas shall be served in the same manner and have the same effect as subpoenas from district courts.

(2) The board shall adopt and promulgate rules and regulations implementing this section, which shall include, but not be limited to, the following: (a) The procedures for refunding contributions, adjusting future contributions or benefit payments, and requiring additional contributions or repayment of benefits; (b) the process for a member, member's beneficiary, employee, or employer to dispute an adjustment of contributions or benefits; and (c) notice provided to all affected persons. All notices shall be sent prior to an adjustment and shall describe the process for disputing an adjustment of contributions or benefits.

Sec. 15. Section 84-1324, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

~~84-1324 All (1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, all annuities or benefits which any person shall be entitled to receive under the State Employees Retirement Act shall not be subject to garnishment, attachment, levy, the operation of bankruptcy or insolvency laws, or any other process of law whatsoever and shall not be assignable except to the extent that such annuities or benefits are subject to a qualified domestic relations order under the Spousal Pension Rights Act. The payment of any annuities or benefits subject to such order shall take priority over any payment made pursuant to subsection (2) of this section.~~

~~(2) If a member of the retirement system is convicted of or pleads no contest to a felony that is defined as assault, sexual assault, kidnapping, child abuse, false imprisonment, or theft by embezzlement and is found liable for civil damages as a result of such felony, following distribution of the member's annuities or benefits from the retirement system, the court may order the payment of the member's annuities or benefits under the retirement system for such civil damages, except that the annuities or benefits to the extent reasonably necessary for the support of the member or any of his or her beneficiaries shall be exempt from such payment. Any order for payment of annuities or benefits shall not be stayed on the filing of any appeal of the conviction. If the conviction is reversed on final judgment, all annuities or benefits paid as civil damages shall be forfeited and returned to the member. The changes made to this section by Laws 2012, LB916, shall apply to persons convicted of or who have pled no contest to such a felony and who have been found liable for civil damages as a result of such felony prior to, on, or after April 7, 2012.~~

Sec. 16. Section 84-1503, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

84-1503 (1) It shall be the duty of the Public Employees Retirement Board:

(a) To administer the retirement systems provided for in the County Employees Retirement Act, the Judges Retirement Act, the Nebraska State Patrol Retirement Act, the School Employees Retirement Act, and the State Employees Retirement Act. The agency for the administration of the retirement systems and under the direction of the board shall be known and may be cited as the Nebraska Public Employees Retirement Systems;

(b) To appoint a director to administer the systems under the direction of the board. The appointment shall be subject to the approval of the Governor and a majority of the Legislature. The director shall be qualified by training and have at least five years of experience in the administration of a qualified public or private employee retirement plan. The director shall not be a member of the board. The salary of the director shall be set by the board. The director shall serve without term and may be removed by the board;

(c) To provide for an equitable allocation of expenses among the retirement systems administered by the board, and all expenses shall be provided from the investment income earned by the various retirement funds unless alternative sources of funds to pay expenses are specified by law;

(d) To administer the deferred compensation program authorized in section 84-1504;

(e) To hire an attorney, admitted to the Nebraska State Bar Association, to advise the board in the administration of the retirement systems listed in subdivision (a) of this subsection;

(f) To hire an internal auditor to perform the duties described in section 84-1503.04 who meets the minimum standards as described in section 84-304.03;

(g) To adopt and implement procedures for reporting information by employers, as well as testing and monitoring procedures in order to verify the accuracy of such information. The information necessary to determine membership shall be provided by the employer. The board shall adopt and promulgate rules and regulations and prescribe such forms necessary to carry out this subdivision. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to require the board to conduct onsite audits of political subdivisions for compliance with statutes, rules, and regulations governing the retirement systems listed in subdivision (1)(a) of this section regarding membership and contributions; and

(h) To prescribe and furnish forms for the public retirement system plan reports required to be filed pursuant to sections 2-3228, 12-101, 14-567, 14-1805.01, 14-2111, 15-1017, 16-1017, 16-1037, 19-3501, 23-1118, 23-3526, 71-1631.02, and 79-987.

(2) In administering the retirement systems listed in subdivision (1)(a)

of this section, it shall be the duty of the board:

(a) To determine, based on information provided by the employer, the prior service annuity, if any, for each person who is an employee of the county on the date of adoption of the retirement system;

(b) To determine the eligibility of an individual to be a member of the retirement system and other questions of fact in the event of a dispute between an individual and the individual's employer;

(c) To adopt and promulgate rules and regulations for the management of the board;

(d) To keep a complete record of all proceedings taken at any meeting of the board;

(e) To obtain, by a competitive, formal, and sealed bidding process through the materiel division of the Department of Administrative Services, actuarial services on behalf of the State of Nebraska as may be necessary in the administration and development of the retirement systems, including, but not limited to, preparation of an annual actuarial valuation report of each of the defined benefit and cash balance plans administered by the board. Such annual valuation reports shall be presented by the actuary to the Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee of the Legislature at a public hearing or hearings. Any contract for actuarial services shall contain a provision allowing the actuary, without prior approval of the board, to perform actuarial studies of the systems as requested by entities other than the board, if notice, which does not identify the entity or substance of the request, is given to the board, all costs are paid by the requesting entity, results are provided to the board, the Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee of the Legislature, and the Legislative Fiscal Analyst upon being made public, and such actuarial studies do not interfere with the actuary's ongoing responsibility to the board. The term of the contract shall be for up to three years. A competitive, formal, and sealed bidding process shall be completed at least once every three years, unless the board determines that such a process would not be cost effective under the circumstances and that the actuarial services performed have been satisfactory, in which case the contract may also contain an option for renewal without a competitive, formal, and sealed bidding process for up to three additional years. An actuary under contract for the State of Nebraska shall be a member of the American Academy of Actuaries and meet the academy's qualification standards to render a statement of actuarial opinion;

(f) To direct the State Treasurer to transfer funds, as an expense of the retirement systems, to the Legislative Council Retirement Study Fund. Such transfer shall occur beginning on or after July 1, 2005, and at intervals of not less than five years and not more than fifteen years and shall be in such amounts as the Legislature shall direct;

(g) To adopt and promulgate rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of each retirement system described in subdivision (1)(a) of this section, which includes, but is not limited to, the crediting of military service, direct rollover distributions, and the acceptance of rollovers;

(h) To obtain, by a competitive, formal, and sealed bidding process through the materiel division of the Department of Administrative Services, auditing services for a separate compliance audit of the retirement systems to be completed by December 31, 2020, and from time to time thereafter at the request of the Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee of the Legislature, to be completed not more than every four years but not less than every ten years. The compliance audit shall be in addition to the annual audit conducted by the Auditor of Public Accounts. The compliance audit shall include, but not be limited to, an examination of records, files, and other documents and an evaluation of all policies and procedures to determine compliance with all state and federal laws. A copy of the compliance audit shall be given to the Governor, the board, and the Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee of the Legislature and shall be presented to the committee at a public hearing;

(i) To adopt and promulgate rules and regulations for the adjustment of contributions or benefits, which includes, but is not limited to: (i) The procedures for refunding contributions, adjusting future contributions or benefit payments, and requiring additional contributions or repayment of benefits; (ii) the process for a member, member's beneficiary, employee, or employer to dispute an adjustment to contributions or benefits; (iii) establishing materiality and de minimus amounts for agency transactions, adjustments, and inactive account closures; and (iv) notice provided to all affected persons. Following an adjustment, a timely notice shall be sent that describes the adjustment and the process for disputing an adjustment to contributions or benefits; ~~and~~

(j) To make a thorough investigation through the director or the director's designee, of any overpayment of a benefit, when in the judgment of the director such investigation is necessary, including, but not limited to, circumstances in which benefit payments are made after the death of a member or beneficiary and the retirement system is not made aware of such member's or beneficiary's death. In connection with any such investigation, the board, through the director or the director's designee, shall have the power to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of books, papers, records, and documents, whether in hardcopy, electronic form, or otherwise, and issue subpoenas for such purposes. Such subpoenas shall be served in the same manner and have the same effect as subpoenas from district courts; and

(k j) To administer all retirement system plans in a manner which will maintain each plan's status as a qualified plan pursuant to the Internal

Revenue Code, as defined in section 49-801.01, including: Section 401(a)(9) of the Internal Revenue Code relating to the time and manner in which benefits are required to be distributed, including the incidental death benefit distribution requirement of section 401(a)(9)(G) of the Internal Revenue Code; section 401(a)(25) of the Internal Revenue Code relating to the specification of actuarial assumptions; section 401(a)(31) of the Internal Revenue Code relating to direct rollover distributions from eligible retirement plans; section 401(a)(37) of the Internal Revenue Code relating to the death benefit of a member whose death occurs while performing qualified military service; and section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code by meeting the requirements of section 414(d) of the Internal Revenue Code relating to the establishment of retirement plans for governmental employees of a state or political subdivision thereof. The board shall adopt and promulgate rules and regulations necessary or appropriate to maintain such status including, but not limited to, rules or regulations which restrict discretionary or optional contributions to a plan or which limit distributions from a plan.

(3) By March 31 of each year, the board shall prepare a written plan of action and shall present such plan to the Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee of the Legislature at a public hearing. The plan shall include, but not be limited to, the board's funding policy, the administrative costs and other fees associated with each fund and plan overseen by the board, member education and informational programs, the director's duties and limitations, an organizational structure of the office of the Nebraska Public Employees Retirement Systems, and the internal control structure of such office to ensure compliance with state and federal laws.

Sec. 17. Section 84-1505, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

84-1505 (1) All compensation deferred under the plan, all property and rights purchased with the deferred compensation, and all investment income attributable to the deferred compensation, property, or rights shall be held in trust for the exclusive benefit of participants and their beneficiaries by the State of Nebraska until such time as payments shall be paid under the terms of the deferred compensation plan. All such assets held in trust shall be invested by the state investment officer pursuant to the Nebraska Capital Expansion Act and the Nebraska State Funds Investment Act.

(2) The State Treasurer shall be the custodian of the funds and securities of the deferred compensation plan and may deposit the funds and securities in any financial institution approved by the Nebraska Investment Council. All disbursements therefrom shall be paid by him or her only upon vouchers duly authorized by the retirement board. The State Treasurer shall furnish annually to the retirement board a sworn statement of the amount of the funds in his or her custody belonging to the deferred compensation plan, which statement shall be as of the calendar year ending December 31 of each year.

(3) ~~All~~ Except as provided in subsection (4) of this section, all compensation deferred under the plan, all property and rights purchased with the deferred compensation, and all investment income attributable to the deferred compensation, property, or rights shall not be subject to garnishment, attachment, levy, the operation of bankruptcy or insolvency laws, or any other process of law whatsoever and shall not be assignable.

(4) ~~If a participant in the deferred compensation plan is convicted of or pleads no contest to a felony that is defined as assault, sexual assault, kidnapping, child abuse, false imprisonment, or theft by embezzlement and is found liable for civil damages as a result of such felony, following distribution of the participant's compensation deferred under the plan, property and rights purchased with the deferred compensation, or investment income attributable to the deferred compensation, property, or rights from the plan, the court may order the payment of such compensation, property and rights, or investment income for such civil damages, except that the compensation, property and rights, or investment income to the extent reasonably necessary for the support of the participant or any of his or her beneficiaries shall be exempt from such payment. Any order for payment of compensation, property and rights, or investment income shall not be stayed on the filing of any appeal of the conviction. If the conviction is reversed on final judgment, all compensation, property and rights, or investment income paid as civil damages shall be forfeited and returned to the participant. The changes made to this section by Laws 2012, LB916, shall apply to persons convicted of or who have pled no contest to such a felony and who have been found liable for civil damages as a result of such felony prior to, on, or after April 7, 2012.~~

Sec. 18. Original sections 16-1019, 16-1038, 23-2305.01, 23-2322, 24-704.01, 79-904.01, 79-948, 79-9,104, 81-2019.01, 81-2032, 84-1305.02, 84-1324, 84-1503, and 84-1505, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, and sections 14-2111, 24-710.02, and 48-1401, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2014, are repealed.