



RHODE ISLAND POLICE CHIEFS' ASSOCIATION

PRESIDENT
Colonel Bradford
Connor
Warwick Police Dept.

May 21, 2024,

RE: Letter of Support - 2024-H8243

VICE PRESIDENT
Chief Thomas Oates
Woonsocket Police
Dept.

Our Association was established in 1950 and is comprised of more than one-hundred members; including active and retired police chiefs, and associate members – representing nearly fifty municipal, state and campus agencies that serve more than one-million Rhode Islanders living in communities across the Ocean State. Our active engagement on issues of public safety policy and legislation will help shape the future of law enforcement and strengthen trust and respect of the policing profession.

SERGEANT AT
ARMS
Colonel Michael
Correia
Barrington Police
Dept.

The association requests the support of the Rhode Island General Assembly (House of Representatives) with the passage of 2024-H8243 RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- OPTIONAL RETIREMENT FOR MEMBERS OF POLICE FORCE AND FIREFIGHTERS

SECRETARY
Colonel Michael
Winquist
Cranston Police
Dept.

This act would offer the ***option to eliminate the up to the 38% penalty imposed on the retirement allowance for police and fire fighters*** who seek retirement after 20 years of dedicated service by providing an option for members who choose to wait to receive any retirement allowance until they reach what would have been their twenty-five (25) years of total service or age 57 after 20 years of service to provide parity with the municipal pension plans for police officers and fire fighters ***with no financial or demines impact to the system.***

TREASURER
Chief Matthew
Moynihan
South Kingstown
Police Dept.

Working Group Notes: The Pension Working Group considered testimony opining that this disparity has made it difficult for municipalities in MERS to retain employees lured by more attractive retirement provisions in neighboring jurisdictions. The cost increase is comparatively small, so the impact on municipalities attributable to ***this change alone is de minimis.***

IMMEDIATE PAST
PRESIDENT
Chief Kevin Lynch
Bristol Police Dept.

This option was proposed alongside an option, discussed infra, which would permit members of MERS police and fire units to retire at age 57 or over with at least 20 years of service.

EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR
Chief Sidney Wordell,
Ret.

The following table describes costs attributable to this option for FY25 and after:

	MERS POLICE AND FIRE UNITS
Normal Cost	0.00%
UAAL	\$0 million
Funded Ratio	0.0%
Projected FY25 Contribution Percent of Payroll	0.01%
Est. Annual Dollar Amount	\$0.0 million

See pages 34 & 36 of Pension Advisory Working Group Report - Final Report of the Rhode Island Pension Advisory Working Group As Approved 2.26.2024_1.pdf (ri.gov)

Moreover, this provision noted as a reduction (penalty) creates a huge parity issue as the ten (10) municipally managed public safety pension systems - Do Not - have this reduced actuarially coupled with a twenty (20) year service pension. We are seeing Officers leaving MERS departments to accept positions in non-MERS police departments to avoid this inequity.

The Rhode Island Police Chiefs Association (RIPCA) requests that the up to 38% penalty enumerated in current law be modified for police/fire personnel who work and provide twenty (20) years of dedicated service. We are not asking that their pensions be enriched and for that matter for the current law to be changed so members that seek to retire after 20 years of service and collect their pension immediately with the prescribed penalty still have the provision. We are asking for the reduction penalty to be waived/eliminated if a police officer and/or fire fighter serves for 20 years and provides dedicated service that they simply wait until their 25th anniversary. As stated, out of the ten (10) open municipally managed public safety pension systems for police and fire there is no penalty like the provision highlighted or depicted in the current MERS police and fire system statute. Additionally, this legislation would allow us to recruit mature members into the field who can retire at age 57 after 20 years of service – these provisions provide parity with the municipal pension plans for police officers and fire fighters with no financial or demines impact to the system.

Lastly, we remain committed to working with the General Treasurer and the General Assembly to provide the public safety needs our residents deserve.

Kevin M. Lynch | Chief of Police
Immediate Past President | Rhode Island Police Chiefs Association
Bristol Police Department
395 Metacom Avenue
Bristol, RI 02809
P:401-253-6900 | F:401-253-0031

