



State of Rhode Island
Office of the General Treasurer

James A. Diossa
General Treasurer

13 May 2026

The Honorable Louis DiPalma
Chair, Senate Committee on Finance

The Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Finance

RE: *2026-S 2089 – An Act Relating to Public Officers and Employees – Retirement System – Contributions and Benefits*

Chair DiPalma:

I write in support of 2026-S 2089, which would permit retired state employees, teachers, or municipal employees appointed to the Rhode Island State Labor Relations Board (“SLRB”) to serve without jeopardizing their pension benefit.

Currently, retired members of the pension system can serve in several elected or appointed roles – paid and unpaid – without cessation of their pension benefit. *See* R.I. Gen. Laws § 36-10-36 (d)(1). Retirees remain eligible to collect their pension benefit while serving as a mayor or town administrator, a city or town councilor, a school committee member, or as an “unpaid member of any part-time state board or commission.” *Id.* (emphasis added).

The General Assembly created the SLRB in the early 1940s to facilitate peaceful relationships between employers and employees and ensure that each group “bargain[] collectively as between equals.” R.I. Gen. Laws § 28-7-2 (“It is in the public interest that equality of bargaining power be established and maintained”). The SLRB is comprised of three representatives of labor, and three representatives of management each appointed by the Governor and subject to advice and consent of the Senate. *See* R.I. Gen. Laws § 28-7-4. Members receive a stipend for their part-time service.

Since members of the SLRB are compensated, current state law would prohibit any retirees appointed to that board from both serving and collecting their retirement benefit. As such, a member would have to either resign their position or pause their benefit. But the stipend provided by the SLRB cannot properly be considered live-able, nor was it ever intended as such. This amendment would permit retired public servants to continue that service in a new capacity as a board member while continuing to receive their hard-earned benefit.

The pension system is funded on the assumption that a member is eligible to collect their benefit for the remainder of their life. Since this legislation does not alter that underlying assumption or provide an additional benefit a member is not otherwise entitled to receive, it does not necessitate a pension impact note pursuant to the requirements of R.I. Gen. Law § 36-10-39.

Please feel free to reach out to me directly or to my Director of Policy and Intergovernmental Affairs, Robert Craven, Jr., by phone at (401) 330-0661 or by email at Robert.CravenJr@Treasury.RI.gov.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JD' or similar initials, enclosed within a circular flourish.

James A. Diossa
General Treasurer

cc: The Honorable Jake Bissailon