



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 2102, An Act Relating to Towns and Cities – Optional Retirement for Members of Police Force and Firefighters*

Chair DiPalma:

I write with regard to 2026-S 2102, which would permit police officers and firefighters within the Municipal Employees' Retirement System ("MERS") and certain public safety professionals within the Employees' Retirement System of Rhode Island ("ERSRI")¹ to retire without penalty if they have reached age 57 and have at least 20 years of service. Under current state law, members of MERS police and fire units and certain state employees are eligible to retire:

- (1) At age 55 provided they have completed at least 25 years of service;
- (2) At any age provided they have completed at least 27 years of service; or
- (3) At Social Security retirement age (67), provided they have completed at least five years of service.

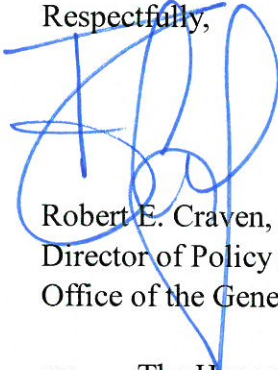
See R.I. Gen. Laws § 45-21.2-5(b); R.I. Gen. Laws § 36-10-9.8. As such, this change impacts a comparatively limited group of public safety professionals. Effectively, it would impact state and local public safety professionals that are older than 57 but younger than 67 with over 20 years of service – but less than 25 years of service – that intend to retire before their twenty-fifth year of service.

¹ Specifically, R.I. Gen. Laws § 36-10-9.8 (a) provides "deputy sheriffs, capitol police officers, environmental police officers, juvenile program workers, shift coordinators, firefighters, crew chiefs, assistant chiefs, fire investigators, fire safety inspectors, fire safety training officers, explosives and flammable liquids technicians, and campus police officers employed by the state of Rhode Island" with the benefits provided by – *inter alia* - R.I. Gen. Laws § 45-21.2-5 (concerning retirement eligibility).

An independent actuarial assessment determined this legislation would increase the total state contribution to the pension system by \$140,000 (0.01% of covered payroll) in Fiscal Year 2026. It would also increase the contribution to the MERS system by a cumulative \$610,000 (0.36% of covered payroll), shared proportionately among all MERS police and fire units. Since these figures are expressed as a percentage of payroll, each will increase over the 20-year statutory amortization period for the unfunded liability.

Please feel free to reach out by email at Robert.CravenJr@treasury.ri.gov or by phone at (401) 330-0661 with any further questions.

Respectfully,



Robert E. Craven, Jr.
Director of Policy and Intergovernmental Affairs
Office of the General Treasurer

cc: The Honorable Matthew LaMountain