

Senate Joint Resolution No. 30

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 126

Senate Joint Resolution No. 30—Relative to social security.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 10, 2012.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SJR 30, Hancock. Social security: retirement benefits: public employees.

This measure would request the President and the Congress of the United States to enact the Social Security Fairness Act of 2011, which would repeal the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision from the Social Security Act.

WHEREAS, After 1965, California's educators were not allowed to participate in the federal social security system; and

WHEREAS, Most peace officers and firefighters, and many other public employees, are not covered by social security; and

WHEREAS, Due to higher contribution rates, the California State Teachers' Retirement System and the California Public Employees' Retirement System provide retirees with superior benefits compared to those provided by the federal social security system; and

WHEREAS, The State Teachers' Retirement System is not coordinated with the federal social security system; and

WHEREAS, The benefits of certain members of the Public Employees' Retirement System and retirement systems established pursuant to the County Employees Retirement Law of 1937 are not coordinated with the federal social security system; and

WHEREAS, The public safety officers' retirement plans are uniquely designed to address the special needs of their professions, including firefighters' unique employment characteristics, such as the physical demands of the job, which ultimately result in higher injury rates and permanent disabilities; and

WHEREAS, The Social Security Act includes two offsets, the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision, that reduce the social security benefits payable to persons who are entitled to benefits under other retirement systems, under certain conditions which directly controvert the designed intention of these California public retirement system plans; and

WHEREAS, These provisions penalize individuals who move from private sector employment into teaching, public safety, and other careers in public service; and

WHEREAS, These provisions penalize individuals who earned social security benefits through their own employment prior to or after public service by denying earned benefits; and

WHEREAS, California has a significant teacher shortage and requires more than 16,000 new teachers per year to meet enrollment growth and retirement replacement needs in targeted schools; and

WHEREAS, Every child should have the opportunity to have a highly qualified teacher in his or her classroom, but the Social Security Act offsets limit the number of fully credentialed teachers in the classroom by penalizing individuals who change from private to public employment; and

WHEREAS, The recruitment and retention of career firefighters, peace officers, and other public safety officers from other states, who are entitled to social security benefits upon retirement, are also limited and restricted by the existing offsets, thereby making non-social security covered employment less attractive to those professionals and, as a result, limiting the number of experienced, knowledgeable people who might otherwise seek out public safety careers in California; and

WHEREAS, The recruitment and retention of teachers and other public employees from other states, who are entitled to social security benefits upon retirement, are also limited and restricted by these offsets; and

WHEREAS, The Social Security Fairness Act of 2011, which would repeal the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision, is currently before Congress; and

WHEREAS, The elimination of the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision would greatly improve the opportunities for hiring and retaining teachers, peace officers, firefighters, and other public employees in California; and

WHEREAS, The elimination of the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision would provide economic stimulus across California by providing earned retirement benefits to public servants in every region of this great state during this time of economic distress; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and the Assembly of the State of California, jointly, That the Legislature of the State of California requests the Congress of the United States to support the Social Security Fairness Act of 2011, which would repeal the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision from the Social Security Act, and the Legislature of the State of California further requests President Barack Obama to sign that legislation; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Majority Leader of the Senate, to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States, and to the author for appropriate distribution.