



Oklahoma State Senate

Legislative Brief

June 1998

Retirement and Other Benefits for Justices and Judges

Issue Background

Issues that pertain to active and retired members of the Uniform Retirement System for Justices and Judges (URSJJ) have always been an important topic on the Legislative agenda. Membership in the URSJJ is composed of approximately one hundred and forty-two (142) retired members and two hundred and fifty-seven (257) active members. During the FY '98 Legislative Session, the following issues were reviewed: 1) retirement benefit issues; 2) survivor benefits issues; and 3) health insurance issues for active members' dependents. It was determined that retired members of the URSJJ did not need a cost of living adjustment similar to the benefit enhancement given to retirees of the other retirement systems because the System's retirement benefit has been lucrative enough to protect against inflation and the erosion of benefits. The following is an outline of benefit enhancements enacted this session for members of the URSJJ:

Summary of Actions

Rule of 80

SB 1032

- The current practice of allowing a Justice or judge to retire after eight (8) years of service when the sum of his or her age and years of service equal eighty (80) is now codified.

Payment Upon Death of Retiree

SB 1032

- Effective July 1, 1998, the final benefit payment, upon the death of a retiree of the URSJJ, will equal a full-monthly payment regardless of the day of the month the retiree died.

Survivor Benefits

SB 1285

- Effective July 1, 1998, a spouse of a deceased retired member of URSJJ may remarry prior to reaching age sixty (60) without forfeiting receipt of survivor benefits.

Flexible Benefit Allowance

HB 2928

- The flexible benefit allowance has been modified, effective July 1, 1998, to provide additional amounts to cover dependent care, if so covered. A single employee not covering any dependents shall have a benefit allowance of Two Hundred Sixty-two Dollars and nineteen cents (\$262.19). If a state employee is carrying coverage for a dependent, then the amount they shall receive will equal Two Hundred Twenty-four Dollars and sixty-nine cents (\$224.69) plus an additional amount as follows:
 - (a) One Hundred Two Dollars and seventy-eight cents (\$102.78) for covering only a spouse;
 - b) Thirty-nine Dollars and twelve cents (\$39.12) for one child;
 - (c) Sixty-nine Dollars and ninety-nine cents (\$69.99) for two or more children;
 - (d) One Hundred Forty-one Dollars and ninety-one cents (\$141.91) for a spouse and one child; or
 - (e) One Hundred Seventy-two Dollars and seventy-seven cents (\$172.77) for a spouse and two or more children.

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