

2003 Legislative Update

Legislation Enacted in the First Regular Session of the 121st Legislature

An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government... for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2004 and June 30, 2005

**PL 2003, Chapter 20 [LD 1319]
Effective Date: July 1, 2003**

This bill is the "Part 1" State budget. Part NN of this bill changes the amortization period currently in place for payment of the unfunded actuarial liability associated with the retirement plan that covers State employees and teachers. *(See related article on page 1 of the Summer 2003 issue of Retirement News.)*

An Act Relating to Employees Whose Membership in the Maine State Retirement System is Optional

**PL 2003, Chapter 261 [LD 672]
Amending: 5 MRSA §§17652, 17703, 17704-A
Effective Date: September 13, 2003
Members Affected: Some State Employees**

This bill changes the purchase of service provisions that apply to optional members in the State employee/teacher retirement plan. It also makes a change to the membership eligibility provisions that apply to specific employees of the Maine Community College System. *(See related article on page 5 of the Summer 2003 issue of Retirement News.)*

An Act Pertaining to Former Members of the Maine State Retirement System

**PL 2003, Chapter 273 [LD 831]
Amending: 5 MRSA §18203
Effective Date: September 13, 2003
Members Affected: Some PLD Employees**

This bill permits a withdrawn participating local district to elect to amend the retirement plan by which its employees who remained MSRS members are covered. Any provision of retirement law, whether effective before or after the district's withdrawal, is available for adoption by the withdrawn district.

An Act To Authorize Certain Former Members of the Maine State Retirement System To Rejoin the Maine State Retirement System

**PL 2003, Chapter 324 [LD 1535]
Effective Date: May 27, 2003
Members Affected: Some Service Retired State and Teacher**

This bill permits any retiree who in 2001, was working towards earning a sufficient amount of money to become restored to membership, but who was unable to become restored to membership as a result of the repeal of the restoration to service provision, to now make an election so as to accomplish that result.

An Act Concerning Disability Retirement Benefits under the Maine State Retirement System

**PL 2003, Chapter 328 [LD 1248]
Amending: 5 MRSA §18530
Effective Date: September 13, 2003
Members Affected: Some Disability Retired PLD**

This bill changes the amount of a disability retirement benefit that can be paid to a recipient who also receives a workers' compensation and/or a social security disability retirement benefit. *(See related article on page 1 of the Summer 2003 issue of Retirement News.)*

(Over)

An Act to Amend Laws Relating to the Maine State Retirement System

**PL 2003, Chapter 387 [LD 1501]
Effective Date: September 13, 2003
Members Affected: State, Teacher and PLD**

This bill makes a number of changes to various provisions of current MSRS statutes. The changes of particular interest include: 1) the period of time that a member may continue to earn creditable service while on a leave of absence in order to serve in the military is increased from four to five years in order to comply with federal law; 2) rehabilitation services are extended to additional disability benefit recipients and participation in those services is made optional (*See related article on page 1 of the Summer 2003 issue of Retirement News.*); and 3) the withdrawal of contributions is made optional for certain participating local district members who terminate membership. (*See related article on page 5 of the Summer 2003 issue of Retirement News.*)

An Act to Update the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management Laws

**PL 2003, Chapter 404 [LD 1513]
Amending: 5 MRSA §17652
Effective Date: September 13, 2003
Members Affected: Some State Employees**

This bill makes membership optional for Maine National Guard members who are on active state service for more than 15 consecutive days. These employees were previously excluded from MSRS membership. (*See related article on page 5 of the Summer 2003 issue of Retirement News.*)

**An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government...
for Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2003, June 30, 2004 and June 30, 2005**

**PL 2003, Chapter 451 [LD 1614]
Effective Date: June 12, 2003
Members Affected: Some State Employees and Retired Teachers**

This bill is the "Part 2" State budget. Part GG of this bill amends the plan coverage for liquor inspectors who were hired prior to September 1, 1984, who were laid off in 2003, and who meet certain eligibility requirements. Part OO of this bill increases the health insurance payment for retired teachers from 35% to 40% effective August 1, 2003.

An Act to Clarify Eligibility in the Maine State Retirement System Life Insurance Program

**PL 2003, Chapter 485 [LD 1107]
Amending: 5 MRSA §18055
Effective Date: September 13, 2003
Members Affected: State, Teacher and PLD**

This bill permits individuals who are covered by group life insurance as a retiree to also be covered by group life insurance as an active member of the System. In order to have the additional coverage, the individual must pay the premium associated with the active employee coverage, regardless of whether the employer normally pays the cost of the coverage.

An Act Concerning Retirement Benefits for State Employees

**PL 2003, Chapter 486 [LD 1009]
Amending: 5 MRSA §§17001 and 17704-B
Effective Date: September 13, 2003
Members Affected: Active and Retired State Employees**

This bill permits members in the judicial and state employee/teacher retirement plan who were required to take days off without pay during the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2002, to elect to pay member contributions and interest in order to include those earnings as earnable compensation. (*See related article on page 6 of the Summer 2003 issue of Retirement News.*)