

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

WEEK 8 OF THE 90TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

March 4, 2015

Overview of Week 8 of the 90th General Assembly ATRS Package Bills Continue to Advance

Due to impending inclement weather, I am sending the Week 8 update of the General Assembly early. If the weather indicators are correct, then it is likely state offices may close or be covered by the inclement weather policy. Several of the ATRS package bills have had action this week.

Two ATRS Package Bills Are Now Acts

SB48: Sponsored by **Senator Bill Sample**. This bill allows members to retire on disability as they currently do, but requires additional requirements for continued eligibility after retirement. SB48 was signed by **Governor Hutchinson** on March 2, 2015, and became **Act 219**.

SB137: Sponsored by **Senator Jason Rapert**. This bill repeals the law that allows a payout of benefits less than \$20 per month and allows a member's annuity to be paid instead. SB137 was signed by **Governor Hutchinson** on March 2, 2015, and became **Act 225**.

One ATRS Package Bill is being Reviewed by the Governor

SB50: Sponsored by **Senator Eddie Cheatham**. This is the ATRS technical corrections bill that makes minor clarifications of existing laws. This bill is being reviewed by the Governor.

Two ATRS Package Bills received Do-Pass in Joint Retirement Committee

On Monday, March 2, 2015, ATRS presented the last two package bills that will be reviewed by the Public Retirement Committee. Both bills received a do-pass from the Committee. The two bills are:

HB1078, sponsored by **Representative Gary Deffenbaugh**. This is a bill that would allow a retiree who chooses his or her spouse as an Option C (guaranteed 120 payments) beneficiary to change beneficiaries or pop-up to straight life annuity if the retiree's marriage ends by divorce or other marriage dissolution within the first 10 years of retirement. Representative Deffenbaugh presented the bill in the Public Retirement Committee and in the House. The bill will soon be

heard by the Senate. ATRS thanks **Representative Deffenbaugh** for sponsoring and presenting this bill.

SB171, sponsored by **Senator Bill Sample**. This bill was drafted in response to discussion in the Public Retirement Committee. It was suggested that the law be amended for clarification and written in an easier to read format. ATRS appreciates the assistance of **Representative Douglas House** for reviewing the clarification in SB171. **Senator David Johnson** presented the bill in the Public Retirement Committee and in the Senate. The bill will soon be heard by the House. ATRS wishes to thank Senator Johnson for presenting the bill at the Public Retirement Committee and in the Senate.

One ATRS Package Bill Remains in the Senate Committee on Revenue and Tax

ATRS is continuing to work towards passage of **HB1132**, an ATRS package bill sponsored by **Representative Monte Hodges**, which allows ATRS to benefit from recycling tax credits on e-waste and other recycling facilities. The bill has passed the House, but remains in the Senate committee as further work is focused on the recycling issues.

Next Steps as the Session Continues and the Weather Improves!

Inclement weather notwithstanding, the ATRS bills are moving quickly through the legislative process. Of the original seven ATRS package bills:

- Four are law;
- One has been delivered to the Governor for review;
- One has received a do-pass from the Joint Retirement Committee, has been passed by the House, and will soon be heard by the Senate;
- One bill is the Senate Committee on Revenue and Tax; and
- ATRS added a package bill that has received a do-pass from the Joint Retirement Committee, has passed the Senate, and will soon be heard by the House.

ATRS will continue to provide weekly updates on the ATRS package bills and any other bills that have an impact on ATRS. ATRS tries to work closely with members of the General Assembly on legislation to ensure issues of interest to the General Assembly are properly addressed.