

1-1 By: Ashby, et al. (Senate Sponsor - Nichols) H.B. No. 4945
1-2 (In the Senate - Received from the House April 30, 2025;
1-3 May 5, 2025, read first time and referred to Committee on Finance;
1-4 May 21, 2025, reported favorably by the following vote: Yeas 13,
1-5 Nays 0; May 21, 2025, sent to printer.)

1-6 COMMITTEE VOTE

	Yea	Nay	Absent	PNV
1-7				
1-8	Huffman	X		
1-9	Hinojosa of Hidalgo	X		
1-10	Alvarado	X		
1-11	Bettencourt	X		
1-12	Campbell	X		
1-13	Creighton	X		
1-14	Flores	X		
1-15	Hall		X	
1-16	Kolkhorst		X	
1-17	Nichols	X		
1-18	Paxton	X		
1-19	Perry	X		
1-20	Schwertner	X		
1-21	West	X		
1-22	Zaffirini	X		

1-23 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
1-24 AN ACT

1-25 relating to a study by the Teacher Retirement System of Texas on the
1-26 feasibility of offering alternative service retirement benefits to
1-27 certain members of the retirement system engaged in wildland
1-28 firefighting or employed in positions related to wildland
1-29 firefighting.

1-30 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

1-31 SECTION 1. Subchapter B, Chapter 825, Government Code, is
1-32 amended by adding Section 825.1086 to read as follows:

1-33 Sec. 825.1086. STUDY AND REPORT ON ALTERNATIVE SERVICE
1-34 RETIREMENT BENEFITS FOR CERTAIN WILDLAND FIREFIGHTERS AND RELATED
1-35 EMPLOYEES. (a) The retirement system shall conduct a study on the
1-36 feasibility of offering members who are Texas A&M Forest Service
1-37 wildland firefighters and are employed in positions related to
1-38 wildland firefighting alternative service retirement benefits
1-39 under the system.

1-40 (b) In conducting the study, the retirement system shall
1-41 assess the costs to and impact on the retirement system associated
1-42 with offering members described by Subsection (a) the following
1-43 alternative service retirement benefits:

1-44 (1) a service retirement benefit under the existing
1-45 benefit plan that provides retirement eligibility and a
1-46 supplemental benefit under Subsection (c) within a new tier, to be
1-47 named Hazardous Duty, for:

1-48 (A) a member who is at least 55 years old and who
1-49 has at least 10 years of service credit as a wildland firefighter;

1-50 (B) a member who has at least 25 years of service
1-51 credit as a wildland firefighter, regardless of age; or

1-52 (C) a member who has at least 20 years of service
1-53 credit as a wildland firefighter, except that the member's service
1-54 retirement annuity will be actuarially reduced by five percent for
1-55 every year of difference between the member's age at retirement and
1-56 the normal retirement age within this tier; and

1-57 (2) a service retirement benefit under the existing
1-58 plan that provides retirement eligibility and a supplemental
1-59 benefit under Subsection (c), as applicable, within a new tier, to
1-60 be named Hazardous Duty-Administrative Support, for:

1-61 (A) a member who is vested in the retirement
1-62 system and who has been employed as a wildland firefighter during
1-63 the entirety of the member's employment with the Texas A&M Forest

Service; or

(B) a member who has service credit as a wildland firefighter equal to at least the minimum number of years of service credit required to vest in the system and who is employed in a position that provides support services to wildland firefighters on the member's retirement date.

(c) The standard service retirement annuity for a member who is eligible to retire under a proposal described by Subsection (b)(1) or (b)(2)(A) would be an amount computed on the basis of the member's average annual compensation for the five years of service, whether or not consecutive, in which the member received the highest annual compensation, times the sum of the percentage factor used in the computation of a standard service retirement annuity under Section 824.203(a) plus 0.5 percent.

(d) The standard service retirement annuity for a member who is eligible to retire under a proposal described by Subsection (b)(2)(B) based on the age and service requirements described in Subsection (b)(1) is the standard service retirement annuity described by Subsection (c), provided the member is not entitled to the additional 0.5 percent described by Subsection (c).

(e) Not later than March 1, 2026, the retirement system shall begin coordinating with the Texas A&M Forest Service to determine:

(1) positions that will qualify for benefits proposed by Subsection (b) and the salaries of both existing and terminated employees who accrued service credit for service provided on or after September 1, 2009, and who would be eligible to retire under any of the requirements proposed by Subsection (b) based on that service credit;

(2) the effectiveness of using either the standard service retirement annuity calculation under Section 824.203 plus 0.5 percent or a different annuity calculation that would provide similar or more benefits than the calculation under Section 824.203 for a member who would be eligible to retire under any of the requirements proposed by Subsection (b)(1) while maintaining the actuarial soundness of the retirement system;

(3) the additional percentage of salary contribution needed by both the employer and employee to provide for the alternative retirement benefits proposed by Subsection (b) while maintaining the actuarial soundness of the retirement system;

(4) the cost computed as additional employer and employee contributions to provide the alternative retirement benefits proposed by Subsection (b) attributable to service credit described by that subsection for service performed on or after September 1, 2009; and

(5) the cost and implications of the minimum age or service credit requirements proposed by Subsection (b) to the extent those age or service credit requirements are less stringent than the minimum age or service credit requirements provided by this subtitle.

(f) Not later than December 31, 2026, the retirement system shall prepare and submit a report to the legislature that contains the findings of the study and the determinations required by Subsection (e).

(g) The Legislative Budget Board and the State Pension Review Board shall, as necessary:

(1) assist the retirement system in conducting the study; and

(2) provide the retirement system with any information needed to complete the report required by Subsection (f).

(h) This section expires September 1, 2027.

SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2025.

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