



Board of Retirement Regular Meeting

Sacramento County Employees' Retirement System

Agenda Item 9C

MEETING DATE: October 18, 2023

SUBJECT: SACRS – 2024 Legislative Proposals

SUBMITTED FOR: Consent Deliberation and Action Receive and File

RECOMMENDATION

Support SACRS legislative proposals for 2024.

PURPOSE

This item complies with the Strategic Management Plan goal of stakeholder communication and outreach by participating in the legislative process to monitor changes in state law affecting public pension plans.

DISCUSSION

The SACRS Legislative Committee is seeking SACRS approval of the member systems at the November 10, 2023 SACRS business meeting to “sponsor” the legislation.

After fielding proposals from member systems and deliberating among the legislative committee, several minor cleanup proposals were selected to be presented in the 2024 legislative session.

These changes include clarification that a retiree’s pension payment can be deposited in a trust account controlled by that member, authority to pay retirees through a prepaid account such as a debit card, removal of a “return receipt” requirement for certified mailings, and clarification regarding the 960-hour post-retirement work limit.

ATTACHMENTS

- Board Order
- SACRS Legislative Committee Letter – September 15, 2023

Prepared by:

/S/

Eric Stern
Chief Executive Officer



Retirement Board Order

Sacramento County Employees' Retirement System

Before the Board of Retirement
October 18, 2023

AGENDA ITEM:

**State Association of County Retirement Systems (SACRS)
Information: Legislative Update – October 2023**

THE BOARD OF RETIREMENT hereby approves Staff's recommendation to support SACRS legislative proposals for 2024.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the above order was passed and adopted on October 18, 2023 by the following vote of the Board of Retirement, to wit:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

ALTERNATES:

(Present but not voting)

James Diepenbrock
Board President

Eric Stern
Chief Executive Officer and
Board Secretary



September 15, 2023

RE: SACRS Legislative Proposals 2024

Dear SACRS Board of Directors,

The SACRS Legislative Committee has developed a legislative package for consideration in the upcoming 2024 legislative session. These proposals reflect the input of SACRS member systems and are intended to provide technical and administrative clarity to various sections of the County Employees Retirement Law of 1937 (CERL or '37 Act).

Proposed amendments to the CERL include the following:

- Clarification that a retiree's pension payment can be deposited in a trust account controlled by that member. This is not intended to change the statutory intent that an ongoing pension payment must be made to a natural person; however, the amendment provides uniformity to an issue that has been interpreted differently across the '37 Act systems. SACRS' tax counsel from the Hanson Bridgett law firm has reviewed the language for appropriateness and compliance with federal and California law.
- Authority for a Board of Retirement to make payments to retirees through a prepaid account (like a debit card). This amendment is intended to accommodate retirees who may not have a traditional checking or savings account, leaving the only option to receive regular pension payments through paper check by mail or in-person. The COVID-19 pandemic and past natural disasters have shown that the use of paper checks can be adversely affected in delivering promised benefits. This amendment only authorizes the system to utilize prepaid accounts as a payment method; it does not mandate it.
- Removal of requirement for a certified mail "return receipt" when sending notices to terminated members or beneficiaries that they have contributions or unclaimed benefits remaining with the system. Though IRS regulations require registered or certified mail for locating members and beneficiaries, the "return receipt" language found in the CERL is not an IRS requirement and reflects an outdated practice. Certified mail now allows the sender to electronically track the letter at significant cost savings.



- Direction for retirement systems to take certain actions when retired members exceed the 960-hour post-retirement employment limit. The proposed amendments would require the system to offset the member’s retirement allowance by the equivalent excess hours paid above 960 hours to ensure that the retired member is not receiving a pension and a salary outside of the prescribed limit. These amendments do not preclude retirement system from also reinstating the member into active service as the system deems necessary.

We thank the Legislative Committee for reviewing these proposals and engaging in a collaborative, deliberative process to achieve consensus on issues. Though seemingly technical, these amendments represent process improvements that will provide administrative efficiencies to retirement systems and members.

Respectfully,

/s/

David Nelsen and Eric Stern
Co-Chairs, Legislative Committee

ATTACHMENT

- SACRS Draft Language – 2024 CERL Amendments

Government Code Section 31452.6 (Amend)

31452.6. (a) The board shall comply with and give effect to a revocable written authorization signed by a retired member or beneficiary of a retired member entitled to a retirement allowance or benefit under this chapter or the California Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2013, authorizing the treasurer or other entity authorized by the board to deliver the monthly warrant, check, or electronic fund transfer, for the retirement allowance or benefit to any specified bank, savings and loan institution, ~~or~~ credit union, or prepaid account to be credited to the account of the retired member or survivor of a deceased retired member. That delivery is full discharge of the liability of the board to pay a monthly retirement allowance or benefit to the retired member or survivor of a deceased retired member.

(b) Any payments directly deposited by electronic fund transfer following the date of death of a person who was entitled to receive a retirement allowance or benefit under this chapter or the California Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2013 shall be refunded to the retirement system.

(c) In order to obtain information from a financial institution following the death of a retired member or the beneficiary of a retired member, as provided in subdivision (o) of Section 7480, the board may certify in writing to the financial institution that the retired member or the beneficiary of a retired member has died and that transfers to the account of the retired member or beneficiary of a retired member at the financial institution from the retirement system occurred after the date of death of the retired member or the beneficiary of a retired member.

(d)(1) For purposes of this section, "the account of the retired member or survivor of a deceased retired member," may include an account held in a living trust or an income only trust (Miller Trust) that is controlled by the retired member or survivor of a deceased retired member or is established for the retired member's (or survivor of a deceased retired member's) benefit in order to qualify for State Medicaid or comparable assistance.

(d)(2) For purposes of this section, the term "prepaid account" shall have the same meaning as defined in, and meet the applicable requirements of, Section 1339.1 of the Unemployment Insurance Code.

Government Code Section 31590 (Amend)

(a) All warrants, checks, and electronic fund transfers drawn on the retirement fund shall be signed or authorized by at least two board officers or employees, designated by the board or by the treasurer if designated by the board. If the treasurer is designated by the board, the board shall also designate the auditor to sign or authorize warrants, checks, and electronic fund transfers. The authorization may be by blanket authorization of all warrants, checks, or electronic fund transfers appearing on a list or register, or may be by a standing order to draw warrants, checks, or electronic fund transfers, which shall be good until revoked. If the treasurer and auditor are designated by the board, a warrant, check, or electronic fund transfer is not valid until it is signed or authorized, numbered, and recorded by the county auditor, except as provided in subdivision (c).

(b)(1) Any person entitled to the receipt of benefits may authorize the payment of the

benefits to be directly deposited by electronic fund transfer into the person's account at the financial institution of the person's choice under a program for direct deposit by electronic transfer established by the board or treasurer if authorized by the board. The direct deposit shall discharge the system's obligation in respect to that payment.

(2) Such person may also authorize the payment of their benefits to be deposited into a prepaid account under a program established by the board or treasurer if authorized by the board. The payment of the benefit into the prepaid account shall discharge the system's obligation in respect to that payment. For purposes of this paragraph, the term "prepaid account" shall have the same meaning as defined in, and meet the applicable requirements of, Section 1339.1 of the Unemployment Insurance Code.

(c) The board may, or, if authorized by the board, the treasurer shall, authorize a trust company or trust department of any state or national bank authorized to conduct the business of a trust company in this state or the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco or any branch thereof within this state, to process and issue payments by check or electronic fund transfer.

Government Code Section 31628 (Amend)

If the service of a member is discontinued other than by death or retirement, upon proper application submitted to the retirement board, he or she shall be paid all of his or her accumulated contributions, in accordance with this chapter, minus a withdrawal charge, if a withdrawal charge has been provided for by the regulations of the board. The board may order payment in whole or in part withheld for a period not to exceed six months after date of separation. If a member does not file the proper application, the board shall send to the member, not more than 90 days after termination of service, at his or her last known address, a registered or certified letter, ~~return receipt requested~~, stating that he or she has money to his or her credit on the books of the retirement system and that if he or she does not claim the money within 10 years after date of notice, in the case of persons first employed before January 1, 1976, or within five years in the case of persons first employed on and after January 1, 1976, the money will be deposited in and become a part of the current pension reserve fund.

Government Code Section 31680.2 (Amend)

(a) Any person who has retired may be employed in a position requiring special skills or knowledge, as determined by the county or district employing them, for a period of time not to exceed 90 working days or 720 hours, whichever is greater, in any one fiscal year or any other 12-month period designated by the board of supervisors and may be paid for that employment. That employment shall not operate to reinstate the person as a member of this system or to terminate or suspend their retirement allowance, and no deductions shall be made from their salary as contributions to this system.

(b) (1) This section shall not apply to any retired person who is otherwise eligible for employment under this section if, during the 12-month period prior to an appointment described in this section, that retired person receives unemployment insurance compensation arising out of prior employment subject to this section with the same employer.

(2) A retired person who accepts an appointment after receiving unemployment insurance compensation as described in this subdivision shall terminate that employment on the last day

of the current pay period and shall not be eligible for reappointment subject to this section for a period of 12 months following the last day of employment.

(3) Beginning January 1, 2013, if any provision of this section conflicts with the California Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2013, the provisions of that act shall prevail, except that the limit on postretirement employment provided in subdivision (a) to the greater of 90 working days or 720 hours shall remain effective.

(c) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), the retired person's retirement allowance shall be considered an overpayment to the extent it is payable during any period in which the retired person is employed and paid for that employment in excess of 90 working days or 720 hours, whichever is greater, in any one fiscal year or any other 12-month period designated by the board of supervisors. Such overpayment shall be subject to collection by the retirement system. This paragraph does not preclude the retirement system from taking additional action as it deems necessary to reinstate the person as a member of the system or terminate or suspend their retirement allowance.

Government Code Section 31680.3 (Amend)

(a) Notwithstanding Section 31680.2, any member who has been covered under the provisions of Section 31751 and has retired may be reemployed in a position requiring special skills or knowledge, as determined by the county or district employing the member, for a period of time not to exceed 120 working days or 960 hours, whichever is greater, in any one fiscal year and may be paid for that employment. That employment shall not operate to reinstate the person as a member of this system or to terminate or suspend the person's retirement allowance, and no deductions shall be made from the person's salary as contributions to this system.

(b) (1) This section shall not apply to any retired member who is otherwise eligible for reemployment under this section if, during the 12-month period prior to an appointment described in this section, that retired person receives unemployment insurance compensation arising out of prior employment subject to this section with the same employer.

(2) A retired person who accepts an appointment after receiving unemployment insurance compensation as described in this subdivision shall terminate that employment on the last day of the current pay period and shall not be eligible for reappointment subject to this section for a period of 12 months following the last day of employment.

(c) Beginning January 1, 2013, if any provision of this section conflicts with the California Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2013, the provisions of that act shall prevail.

(d) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), the retired member's retirement allowance shall be considered an overpayment to the extent it is payable during any period in which the retired member is employed and paid for that employment in excess of 120 working days or 960 hours, whichever is greater, in any one fiscal year. Such overpayment shall be subject to collection by the retirement system. This subdivision does not preclude the retirement system from taking additional action as it deems necessary to reinstate the person as a member of the system or terminate or suspend their retirement allowance.

Government Code Section 31680.6 (Amend)

(a) Notwithstanding Section 31680.2, any county subject to Section 31680.2 may, upon adoption of a resolution by a majority vote by the board of supervisors, extend the period of time provided for in Section 31680.2 for which a person who has retired may be employed in a position requiring special skills or knowledge, as determined by the county or district employing him or her, not to exceed 120 working days or 960 hours, whichever is greater, in any one fiscal year or any other 12-month period designated by the board of supervisors and may be paid for that employment. That employment shall not operate to reinstate the person as a member of this system or to terminate or suspend his or her retirement allowance, and no deductions shall be made from his or her salary as contributions to this system.

(b) (1) This section shall not apply to any retired person who is otherwise eligible for employment under this section if, during the 12-month period prior to an appointment described in this section, that retired person receives unemployment insurance compensation arising out of prior employment subject to this section with the same employer.

(2) A retired person who accepts an appointment after receiving unemployment insurance compensation as described in this subdivision shall terminate that employment on the last day of the current pay period and shall not be eligible for reappointment subject to this section for a period of 12 months following the last day of employment.

(c) Beginning January 1, 2013, if any provision of this section conflicts with the California Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2013, the provisions of that act shall prevail.

(d) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), the retired person's retirement allowance shall be considered an overpayment to the extent it is payable during any period in which the retired person is employed and paid for that employment in excess of 120 working days or 960 hours, whichever is greater, in any one fiscal year of any other 12-month period designated by the board of supervisors. Such overpayment shall be subject to collection by the retirement system. This section does not preclude the retirement system from taking additional action as it deems necessary to reinstate the person as a member of the system or terminate or suspend their retirement allowance.

Government Code Section 31680.9 (Add)

A retired member who is employed pursuant to Section 7522.56 shall have their retirement allowance be considered an overpayment to the extent it is payable during any period in which the retired member is employed and paid for that employment in excess of 960 hours or other equivalent limit in a calendar year or fiscal year. Such overpayment shall be subject to collection by the retirement system. This section does not preclude the retirement system from taking additional action as it deems necessary to reinstate the person as a member of the system or terminate or suspend their retirement allowance.

Government Code Section 31783.5 (Amend)

(a) Whenever a person or estate entitled to payment of a member's accumulated contributions or any other benefit fails to claim the payment or cannot be located, the amount owed from the retirement fund shall be administered in accordance with subdivision (c).

(b) The board shall attempt to locate the claimant through such means as the board in its sound discretion deems reasonable including, but not limited to, a registered or certified letter, ~~return receipt requested~~, mailed to the last known address of the claimant.

(c) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the amounts described in subdivision (a) shall be held for the claimant. If the amounts are not claimed within five years after the last attempted contact with the claimant, the amounts shall be deposited in and become a part of the pension reserve fund. The board may at any time after transfer of unclaimed amounts, upon receipt of information satisfactory to it, authorize the return of amounts so held in reserve to the credit of the claimant. Those amounts shall be paid only to claimants who have not yet attained the age of mandatory distribution under the Internal Revenue Code