



Wyoming Retirement System

Partnering to Build Financial Security for Members and their Families

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Highlights for HB 90 – Community College Police Officers, sponsored by Reps. Pownall, Barlow and Pelkey and Sens. Nethercott and Von Flattern

Affected Parties: Community College Employers and Law Enforcement Plan Members

Position: The WRS Board is neutral on this bill

This bill adds community college police officers to the statutory definition of law enforcement officer. This means community college police officers would be moved to the Law Enforcement Pension Plan if this bill becomes law.

According to the Wyoming Community College Commission, there are currently less than a dozen police officers employed by the seven community colleges. Because this legislation would impact so few people, the Wyoming Retirement System is not concerned about negative impacts to the Public Employee Plan which is the plan that would lose these members.

It is common for public pension plans to have unique provisions or separate plans for public safety personnel, such as police and firefighters, in order to address needs for earlier retirement ages and enhanced disability and death benefits. The range of groups included in a public safety pension is an important consideration. It appears there is a mix of security guards and police officers among these employees, which may be a consideration for policymakers.

The Joint Appropriations Committee funded a study in 2005 by Buck Consultants about the criteria to follow when considering membership in a public safety pension. The report can be found at <https://goo.gl/iAYjkf> and the following are the recommended criteria provided by Buck Consultants. Following are our criteria recommendations:

- (1) Covered employees must be actively and principally engaged in protecting the public from physical harm and danger, including continuous responsibility for safeguarding public and private property. Initially, the ability to perform the job must be evidenced by the employee being certified by completing job-related academic and skills training. Re-certification at periodic intervals should be required.
- (2) The requirements of covered employees' jobs must place a high priority on physical fitness and agility. Initially, covered employees must be required to satisfy physical tests appropriate to their specific positions. As above, re-certification at periodic intervals should be required.
- (3) The safety of the general public would be continuously and substantially jeopardized if covered employees were not permitted to retire or perhaps required to retire at earlier ages than other public plan employees.
- (4) Entry level positions for covered employees require high physical standards and early recruitment ages to ensure physically superior employees and sufficient service to provide reasonable retirement benefits at earlier retirement ages.
- (5) There is a history of disability and death for covered employees' job groups that is significantly in excess of that experience by other job groups. Covered employees are required to actively and continuously protect people from physical harm and their employment requires that they maintain the physical characteristics necessary to ensure an adequate level of public protection.