

## STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 59th Legislature (2024)

SENATE BILL 1524

By: Green

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to the Oklahoma Firefighters Pension and Retirement System; amending 11 O.S. 2021, Section 49-135, as amended by Section 8, Chapter 232, O.S.L. 2022 (11 O.S. Supp. 2023, Section 49-135), which relates to membership benefits and requirements; establishing provisions for return to service by certain members; providing for cessation of certain benefits during certain paid service; prohibiting certain disabled members from returning to service; defining term; updating statutory language and reference; prohibiting further accrual of service; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 11 O.S. 2021, Section 49-135, as amended by Section 8, Chapter 232, O.S.L. 2022 (11 O.S. Supp. 2023, Section 49-135), is amended to read as follows:

Section 49-135. A. No person shall be employed in a fire department who has reached the age of forty-five (45) years, unless it appears he or she shall become eligible for retirement at the age of sixty-five (65) years or unless he or she be retired from a municipal fire department in ~~the State of Oklahoma~~ this state. This section shall not apply to professional engineers, or to persons

1 employed as technical specialists on a temporary basis. The ~~State~~  
2 Oklahoma Firefighters Pension and Retirement Board shall be  
3 authorized to establish the maximum age, within the limits herein  
4 prescribed, over which an applicant may not be considered for  
5 initial employment, but no person shall be prohibited from making  
6 application for reemployment and having such reemployment  
7 application considered merely because of his or her age, provided  
8 that such person be under the age of forty-five (45) years, and  
9 provided further, that such reemployment shall be with the consent  
10 of the fire chief of such municipality.

11 B. On or after ~~the effective date of this act~~ November 1, 2015,  
12 a person who performs volunteer services as a firefighter, who has  
13 attained the age of forty-five (45) or more years as of the first  
14 date such volunteer services are performed, for a municipality or a  
15 county shall not be eligible to be a member of the Oklahoma  
16 Firefighters Pension and Retirement System for any purpose, shall  
17 not be eligible for any benefit payable by the System and shall not  
18 receive any form of service credit from the System resulting from  
19 such volunteer services. The person responsible for decisions  
20 regarding the performance of firefighting services having  
21 jurisdiction, which in the absence of any other requirement to the  
22 contrary shall be the ~~Fire Chief~~ fire chief, shall make the final  
23 determination on applicants for positions that would involve the  
24 performance of volunteer firefighting services if the applicant is

1 over the age of forty-five (45) years based on local rules,  
2 regulations, ordinances, guidelines and standard operating  
3 procedures.

4 C. Notwithstanding the requirements of subsections C and H of  
5 Section 49-106.1 of this title to terminate employment with all  
6 participating municipalities as a firefighter, a ~~person~~ retired,  
7 paid firefighter receiving an accrued retirement benefit pursuant to  
8 Section 49-106 of this title may perform volunteer firefighting  
9 services for a volunteer department pursuant to subsection B of this  
10 section and continue to receive the member's accrued retirement  
11 ~~benefit; provided,~~ benefit. A member performing services for a volunteer  
12 fire department under this section shall not further accrue any  
13 years of credited service during such period. Provided, that the  
14 pension shall cease during any period of time the member may  
15 thereafter serve for compensation in any municipal fire department  
16 in the state; provided further, that no person shall perform any  
17 services as a firefighter if such person is receiving disability  
18 benefits pursuant to Section 49-109 of this title.

19 D. 1. Notwithstanding the requirements of subsections C and H  
20 of Section 49-106.1 of this title, a retired volunteer firefighter  
21 receiving the maximum allowable accrued retirement benefit pursuant  
22 to Section 49-101 of this title may return to service as a volunteer  
23 firefighter for a volunteer fire department pursuant to subsection B  
24 of this section and continue to receive the member's retirement

1 benefit. The retired volunteer firefighter shall not further accrue  
2 any years of credited service during such period. Provided, the  
3 benefit shall cease during any time period the retiree may  
4 thereafter serve for compensation in any municipal fire department  
5 in the state; provided further, no person shall perform any services  
6 as a volunteer firefighter if such person is receiving disability  
7 benefits pursuant to Section 49-109 of this title.

8 2. For the purposes of this subsection, "maximum allowable  
9 accrued retirement benefit" means a benefit calculated using thirty  
10 (30) years of credited service pursuant to subsection A of Section  
11 49-101 of this title. Provided, if the member has elected to  
12 participate in the Oklahoma Firefighters Deferred Option Plan  
13 pursuant to Section 49-106.1 of this title, credited service for  
14 benefit calculation shall be calculated as of the date that the  
15 member begins participation in the Plan, or the back drop date if  
16 elected under subsection H of Section 49-106.1 of this title.

17 E. No person serving as a firefighter pursuant to this section  
18 shall be eligible to serve as the fire chief. Pursuant to Section  
19 49-100.1 of this title, the fire chief shall be an active member of  
20 the System within a participating municipality of which he or she  
21 serves as fire chief.

22 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 2024.

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