

1 **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON INCREASING PAY FOR**
2 **CERTAIN PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS AND**
3 **FIREFIGHTERS**

4 2017 GENERAL SESSION

5 STATE OF UTAH

6 **Chief Sponsor: Todd Weiler**

7 House Sponsor: Timothy D. Hawkes

8
9 **LONG TITLE**

10 **General Description:**

11 This concurrent resolution encourages a pay increase for the public safety officers and
12 firefighters who are Tier II retirement system members.

13 **Highlighted Provisions:**

14 This resolution:

- 15 ▶ recognizes the vital roles of public safety officers and firefighters;
- 16 ▶ recognizes the necessity of creating the Tier II retirement system in order to stabilize
17 participating employers' pension funding obligations and control future retirement
18 benefit costs;
- 19 ▶ acknowledges that starting wages for public safety officers and firefighters are
20 below market starting wages;
- 21 ▶ acknowledges that the Tier II annual employers' savings provide the opportunity and
22 means to fund a pay increase; and
- 23 ▶ encourages the state of Utah, as well as the other employers of public safety officers
24 and firefighters throughout the state, to provide a pay increase for its public safety
25 officer and firefighter employees who are Tier II members.

26 **Special Clauses:**

27 None



28

29 *Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein:*

30 WHEREAS, public safety officers ~~§~~ **§**, **including law enforcement officers, correctional**
30a **officers, and special function officers,** ~~§~~ and firefighters perform vital roles in serving and
31 protecting the public and property;

32 WHEREAS, performing these roles requires specialized training and strenuous activity,
33 and puts officers' and firefighters' personal safety and lives at risk;

34 WHEREAS, retirement systems and plans:

- 35 • provide deferred compensation as part of a total employment compensation and
36 benefits package;
- 37 • help employers attract and retain the required workforce;
- 38 • reward longevity related to years of service; and
- 39 • provide an income base for retirees that enhances economic security and income
40 replacement in later years;

41 WHEREAS, in 2010, the Legislature passed S.B. 63, New Public Employees' Tier II
42 Contributory Retirement Act, which continued the participation of existing public employees in
43 the Utah Retirement Systems' Tier I defined benefits systems and plans, but created Tier II
44 retirement systems and plans for public employees beginning employment on or after July 1,
45 2011, who did not have previous service credit with the Utah Retirement Systems;

46 WHEREAS, the Tier II retirement systems reduced the retirement benefits offered to
47 new public employees in comparison to the retirement benefits previously offered to public
48 employees, and these Tier II changes affected the retirement benefits for new public safety
49 officers and firefighters;

50 WHEREAS, the reduction in retirement benefits under the Tier II systems was enacted
51 as an important part of the long-term plan for stabilizing the pension funding obligations and
52 controlling benefits costs for the participating employers;

53 WHEREAS, while the total compensation package for public sector employees in Utah
54 was generally considered competitive with the private sector when S.B. 63 passed, starting
55 wages were approximately 30% below market starting wages;

56 WHEREAS, the concern was raised that a benefit reduction, when combined with
57 lower starting wages, may discourage individuals from choosing public sector employment,
58 and especially public safety and firefighter careers;

59 WHEREAS, proponents of S.B. 63 argued that controlling pension and future benefits
60 costs would, over time, make more money available to systematically fund pay increases in
61 order to close the public sector wage gap;

62 WHEREAS, since its implementation, the Tier II retirement systems are accomplishing
63 S.B. 63's objectives and controlling public employers' pension and future benefits costs;

64 WHEREAS, the total savings for all of Utah's employers resulting from Tier II public
65 safety officers and firefighters in 2015 was \$6.8 million, and these annual savings are steadily
66 growing as the workforce shifts from Tier I to Tier II members; and

67 WHEREAS, the Tier II annual employers' savings provide the opportunity and means to
68 fund a pay increase for the public safety officers and firefighters that are Tier II members:

69 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the
70 Governor concurring therein, encourages the state of Utah, as well as the other employers of
71 public safety officers and firefighters throughout the state, to provide a pay increase for its
72 public safety officer and firefighter employees who are members of the New Public Safety and
73 Firefighter Tier II Contributory Retirement System.

Legislative Review Note
Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel