



## Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability

### PENSION IMPACT NOTE *104<sup>th</sup> General Assembly*

BILL NO: **HB 1620**

January 27, 2025

SPONSOR: Johnson

SYSTEM: Downstate Fire

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#### FISCAL IMPACT

**HB 1620 adds amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) to the list of conditions that enable a firefighter to qualify for an occupational disease disability pension in the Downstate Fire Article of the Pension code. The number of Illinois firefighters that are diagnosed with ALS is unknown. The CDC estimated that 9.1 people were diagnosed with ALS for every 100,000 in 2017. A study by the Italian National Institute of Health found that firefighters had twice the likelihood of being diagnosed with ALS than the general population. Given the rarity of the disease, the impact on Downstate Fire pension funds is assumed to be negligible.**

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**SUBJECT MATTER:** HB 1620 amends the Downstate Fire Article of the Pension code to add amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) to the list of conditions that enable a firefighter to qualify for an occupational disease disability pension.

#### COMMENT:

HB 1620 amends the Downstate Fire Article of the Pension code to add amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) to the list of conditions that enable a firefighter to qualify for an occupational disease disability pension. Under current law, an active firefighter with 5 or more years of service credit who is unable to perform their duties due to the following conditions is eligible for an occupational disease pension:

- Heart Disease;
- Stroke;
- Tuberculosis; or
- Any disease of the lungs or respiratory track

- A disabling cancer, if it arose as a result of service

Downstate Firefighters who qualify for an occupational disease disability pension receive an annuity equal to 65% of salary at the time of withdrawal from service, regardless of tier status. Research suggests that firefighters face a higher risk of ALS, likely due to exposure to toxins, extreme physical exertion, and intermittent hypoxia (Vanacore et al., 2010; Muscular Dystrophy Association). But given the rarity of the disease, it is unlikely that any given fund would add more than one ALS disability annuitant at any given time.

By way of showing fund-specific context for the number of disability annuities currently being paid, the following information was obtained from the Illinois Firefighters Pension Investment Fund (IFPIF):

- The Rock Island Fire Pension Fund had 57 active members and 10 disability annuitants;
- The Moline Fire Pension Fund had 65 active members and 16 disability annuitants; and
- The East Moline Fire Pension Fund had 35 active members and 9 disability annuitants.

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