

SUPPORT HB 939

*GOOD AFTERNOON COMMITTEE CHAIR, VICE CHAIR AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS,
THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING ME TO TESTIFY TODAY.*

I am a vested member of the system who has reached retirement age. I am being denied my rightful benefits because I am still working. I work for both Harford Community College part time and fulltime with Baltimore City Schools, both of which belong to the state pension system. I am told to be able to draw my benefits I must sever all employment with any employer that is a member of the system which both of these are. I am told this is to prevent an in-service distribution which I totally understand. My situation would not constitute an in-service distribution.

I feel my situation is different from that which this requirement is in place to address - the in-service distribution. Baltimore City Schools has me enrolled in their own city pension system. I am not allowed by them to go back into the state system. I requested of the state retirement board director that since I am being denied my benefits that I be placed back in the system while I still work. I was told this cannot be done. I completely understand how one cannot be working and paying into the retirement system and also be drawing benefits at the same time. That is not my case. I work part time for HCC and therefore am ineligible to participate in the retirement system. My position will never be fulltime whereby I would be eligible for participation in the retirement system. Both of my jobs do not allow me to participate in the state retirement system yet to be able to draw rightfully earned benefits I must quit my employment which at this time I am not wanting to do.

I feel this is quite unfair to me and possible a violation of my civil rights since the state government is telling me whether or not I can work and placing stipulations on that right to work.

I had requested an administrative appeal hearing on this matter. I received a reply that my hearing would be April of 2021! By the time of this hearing this situation would be ongoing for more than a year and a half past my retirement date of October 2019. To me that is ridiculous. I expect a timely response to my situation and this is not being addressed in a timely manner in anyone's eyes I would think.

I am being denied my vested benefits because I am working for two organizations of which I have no possibility of being a participant in the state system. I have met the requirements to vest in the retirement system but must quit working in order to receive my benefits. This is not right and I resent my government doing this to me. I am greatly disturbed and extremely upset with this situation and am losing faith in my government. The government that takes my tax dollars and is to be serving me and not treating me in such an unfair manner.

I would be more than willing to speak with anyone needing more information or having questions of my situation.

THANK YOU ALLOWING ME TO express myself TODAY AND I URGE YOU TO SUPPORT THIS LEGISLATION.

Sincerely,
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