



## **Legislative Update for Fiscal Year 2017**

***During the 2017 legislative session the Rhode Island General Assembly passed a small handful of bills that directly affect members of Employees' Retirement System of Rhode Island.***

Two changes to post-retirement employment were approved by the General Assembly and became law:

The first change in post-retirement employment increased the amount that retired educators who are employed part-time by state colleges, universities or schools may earn. Educators may now earn up to \$18,000 in a school year (*an increase from \$15,000*) without impacting their pension benefit.

Additionally, retired nurses who are employed part-time at a state-operated facility or who teach at a nursing program at a state college or university, may work up to 75 full days or 150 half days without impacting their pension benefit. For nurses, a "half day" is defined as working up to 3 hours. A "full day" is defined as working more than 3 hours.

Governor Raimondo signed a bill approving a 10% increase to the Teachers' Survivor Benefit (*which was last increased in 2004*). The change will immediately benefit approximately 500 surviving spouses of teachers. To fund the increase in the Teachers' Survivor Benefit, the annual contribution for eligible teachers and their employers was raised from \$96 to \$115. With this change, the Teachers' Survivor Benefit program maintains a healthy funding level of 129%.

Lastly, a new law codified the practice of the State Retirement Board related to accidental disability retirement for firefighters or police officers. The law ensures that a member who has a work-related illness and is permanently disabled is eligible for a disability pension.