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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- TEACHERS' RETIREMENT

Introduced By: Representatives McEntee, Serpa, O'Brien, Spears, Caldwell, Biah,  
Donovan, Phillips, Messier, and Furtado

Date Introduced: February 11, 2026

Referred To: House Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1           SECTION 1. Section 16-16-26 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-16 entitled "Teachers'  
2 Retirement [See Title 16 Chapter 97 — The Rhode Island Board of Education Act]" is hereby  
3 amended to read as follows:

4           **16-16-26. Spouse's, former spouse divorced, or domestic partner's benefits.**

5           (a) Spouse's, former spouse divorced, and domestic partner's benefits are payable  
6 following the decease of a member as provided in §§ 16-16-25 — 16-16-38.

7           (b) The spouse, former spouse divorced, or domestic partner shall be entitled to benefits  
8 upon attaining the age of sixty (60) years.

9           (c) The spouse, former spouse divorced, or domestic partner was living with the deceased  
10 member at the time of the member's death. A spouse, former spouse divorced, or domestic partner  
11 is deemed to have been living with the deceased member if they were both members of the same  
12 household on the date of the deceased member's death, or the spouse, former spouse divorced, or  
13 domestic partner was receiving contributions from the deceased member toward support on that  
14 date, or the deceased member had been ordered by a court to contribute to the spouse's, former  
15 spouse divorced, or domestic partner's support.

16           (d) Remarriage of the spouse, former spouse divorced, or domestic partner or establishment  
17 of a domestic partnership shall render the person ineligible to receive current or future benefits  
18 under this section.

19           (e) The spouse or domestic partner of a member, as defined in this section, shall be entitled

1 to monthly benefits payable in accordance with the following table:

2		<b>Spouse's or Domestic</b>	
3	<b>Highest Annual</b>	<b>Partner's Monthly</b>	
4	<b>Salary</b>	<b>Minimum Benefit</b>	
5	\$17,000 or less	<del>\$825</del>	<u>\$1,025</u>
6	\$17,001 to \$25,000	<del>\$963</del>	<u>\$1,200</u>
7	\$25,001 to \$33,000	<del>\$1,100</del>	<u>\$1,375</u>
8	\$33,001 to \$40,000	<del>\$1,238</del>	<u>\$1,550</u>
9	\$40,001 and over	<del>\$1,375</del>	<u>\$1,725</u>

10 (f) The former spouse divorced shall be entitled to monthly benefits, payable in accordance  
11 with the table provided in subsection (e) of this section, only if there are no dependent children,  
12 parents, or other spouse or domestic partner entitled to benefits.

13 (g) A yearly adjustment of the base benefit, and a yearly cost-of-living adjustment for  
14 spouse's, former spouse divorced, or domestic partner's benefits shall be based on the annual social  
15 security adjustment.

16 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
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RELATING TO EDUCATION -- TEACHERS' RETIREMENT

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- 1           This act would increase the monthly minimum death benefit for a spouse, domestic partner
- 2           or former spouse.
- 3           This act would take effect upon passage.

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