

Rep. Green offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 218.

A resolution to support other post-employment benefits for current and future local government employees and reaffirm our commitment to local government employees for their devoted service to Michigan communities.

Whereas, Employees of local governments depend upon their retirement benefits, including post-employment health benefits, guaranteed to them as a condition of employment. This is especially the case for police and fire officials who, after years of devoted service to their communities, are often forced into early retirement because of dangerous and demanding workplace conditions. Yet, in the face of local financial hardship, local government employees have become the targets of pension and benefit reductions over the past several legislative sessions; and

Whereas, Stripping retirement and other post-employment benefits dishonors the dedication and sacrifice local government employees have made to their communities. Reducing benefits will also have an adverse effect on the ability of local government offices, including police and fire departments, to recruit and retain qualified personnel. Prospective candidates look at the current benefit packages and the actions of state and local decision makers when deciding whether a career in public service will lead to adequate and comfortable retirement benefits; and

Whereas, The needs for one local retirement system in Michigan are different from the needs of another local retirement system. Each local retirement system is unique in the pension benefits they offer, populations they serve, and financial statuses of their funds. For the 340 general purpose counties and municipal governments with other post-employment benefit liabilities, the financial health of these systems and the level of benefits offered vary from plan to plan as well; and

Whereas, Altering such a complex and diverse group of retirement systems requires ample time and thoughtful discussion, not drastic sweeping changes. The Responsible Retirement Reform for Local Government Task Force was formed to develop recommendations that ensure the financial well-being of local retirement systems and the effective delivery of retirement benefits for local public servants. The recommendations given by Governor Snyder and the committee were arrived at after thoughtful bipartisan review and discussion. They recognize that the broad variance of local retirement systems makes it challenging to develop a one-size-fits-all approach to municipal retirement reform; and

Whereas, Crafting legislation that protects the promises made to local public employees and offers attractive benefits to the next generation of first responders and other public servants is of paramount importance. Implementing reforms put forth by the task force—like requiring greater reporting and transparency, fiscal stress testing, and the creation of the Municipal Stability Board—will ensure that the benefits promised are delivered. This bipartisan, fiscally responsible approach recommended by the committee would help resolve unfunded liabilities without sacrificing the benefits of hardworking public employees; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we support other post-employment benefits for current and future local government employees and reaffirm our commitment to local government employees for their devoted service to Michigan communities; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Governor.