

to that view and furthermore I am in complete agreement with the principle of the bill that accidental disability retirement should not be conditioned on an arbitrary age limitation.

My concern is broader than the subject of this bill. I have serious reservations about the extent of the present provisions for accidental disability retirement. They involve pension of two-thirds of final average salary, plus an annuity which may be purchased from the member's accumulated contributions to his retirement system. To this extent they are quite reasonable. However, since the enactment of these provisions, benefits under the Social Security Program have been made available to State employees. When this is considered, along with the situation that substantial amounts paid to a disabled employee under the program would receive preferential treatment under income tax provisions, the conclusion is reached that it is entirely possible that a person receiving benefits under these programs would experience a "take-home" pay substantially greater than his net salary when fully employed.

For this reason, although there is no question in my mind that an employee disabled during a job-connected accident should be adequately protected and compensated, I feel that the entire program should be re-evaluated in the light of the factors mentioned, to ascertain that it is not an undue or unfair burden on the taxpayers of the State, but at the same time adequate for State employees.

Under these circumstances, I am reluctant to do anything that would have the effect of expanding the program until such a re-evaluation can be completed.

Nevertheless, I would not veto this bill, particularly because of what seems to be an inequity under the present law, were it not for the fact that no appropriation has been made for its implementation during this fiscal year. Thus, its signing could have no practical effect. Hopefully, the re-evaluation I have mentioned can be undertaken by the time that an appropriation would normally be made.

For these reasons, I feel compelled to veto the bill at this time.

Sincerely yours,

(s) SPIRO T. AGNEW,

Governor.

*Read and journalized.*

House Bill No. 22—By the Speaker (Legislative Council).

AN ACT to repeal and re-enact, with amendments, Section 11(7) of Article 73B of the Annotated Code of Maryland (1957 Edition), title "Pensions," subtitle "In General," and to repeal and re-enact, with amendments, Section 113(4A) of Article 77 of said Code (1965 Replacement Volume and 1966 Supplement), title "Public Education," subtitle "Chapter 8. Teachers' Certificates, Salaries and Pensions," subheading "Teachers' Retirement System," AND TO REPEAL AND RE-ENACT, WITH AMENDMENTS, SECTION 53 (6) OF ARTICLE 88B OF THE SAID CODE (1966 SUPPLEMENT), TITLE "STATE POLICE," SUBTITLE "STATE POLICE RETIREMENT SYSTEM"; amending the laws relating to the Employees' and Teachers' AND STATE POLICE Retirement Systems by removing therefrom the age requirement for an accidental disability benefit.