

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

REPORT

OF THE

RECESS COMMISSION ON RETIREMENT AND
PENSIONS

CREATED BY CHAPTER 128 OF THE RESOLVES OF 1955

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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

MEMBERSHIP.

Sen. PHILIP A. GRAHAM, Hamilton, *Chairman*.

Sen. PAUL H. BENOIT, Southbridge.

Rep. THEOPHILE J. DESROCHES, New Bedford, *Vice-Chairman*.

Rep. JOHN J. CAVANAUGH, Holyoke.

Rep. ARCHIBALD E. KENEFICK, Lowell.

Rep. WALTER W. O'BRIEN, Raynham.

HARRY M. LACK, Everett.

Mrs. JOHN C. STARR, Framingham.

ANTHONY J. STONINA, Chicopee.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

AUTHORIZATION.

CHAPTER 128 OF THE RESOLVES OF 1955.

RESOLVE ESTABLISHING AN UNPAID SPECIAL COMMISSION TO STUDY CERTAIN MATTERS RELATING TO RETIREMENT AND PENSIONS.

Resolved, That a special unpaid commission, to consist of two members of the senate to be designated by the president thereof, four members of the house of representatives to be designated by the speaker thereof, and three persons to be appointed by the governor, is hereby established to study and consider the subject matter of current senate documents numbered 60, 61, 144, 147, 148, 417, 418, 419, 420, 422, 430, 431, 432, 433 and 625, and of current house documents numbered 216, 219, 221, 222, 223, 224, 351, 355, 444, 445, 446, 449, 676, 677, 678, 679, 685, 686, 692, 694, 697, 700, 915, 916, 918, 924, 1174, 1176, 1178, 1179, 1186, 1187, 1188, 1189, 1428, 1430, 1442, 1443, 1668, 1673, 1675, 1919, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1927, 1930, 1931, 1936, 1937, 2182, 2183, 2186, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2408, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2455, 2474, 2478, 2678 and 2690. Said commission shall be provided with quarters in the state house or elsewhere, may hold hearings, may require by summons the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of books and papers, may call on state officials and department heads for advice and assistance, and may expend for expert, clerical and other services and expenses such sums as may hereafter be appropriated therefor. Said commission shall report to the general court the result of its study, and its recommendations, if any, together with drafts of legislation necessary to carry said recommendations into effect, by filing the same with the clerk of the house of representatives not later than the first Wednesday of December in the current year. *Approved August 24, 1955.*

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REPORT OF THE RECESS COMMISSION ON RETIREMENT AND PENSIONS.

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, December 6, 1955.

To the General Court of Massachusetts.

The Recess Commission on Retirement and Pensions, created by chapter 128 of the Resolves of 1955, herewith submits its report.

Following the terms of the resolve, the President of the Senate appointed Senators Philip A. Graham of Hamilton and Paul H. Benoit of Southbridge; the Speaker of the House of Representatives appointed Representatives Theophile J. DesRoches of New Bedford, John J. Cavanaugh of Holyoke, Archibald E. Kenefick of Lowell and Walter W. O'Brien of Raynham; and His Excellency the Governor, appointed Harry M. Lack of Everett, Mrs. John C. Starr of Framingham and Anthony M. Stonina of Chicopee.

At a subsequent organization meeting of the Commission, Senator Graham was elected chairman and Representative Des Roches vice-chairman.

Under the terms of chapter 128 of the Resolves of 1955, the Commission was directed to study the subject matter of 86 bills, all of which relate to the pension and retirement system.

Some of these are special bills for various individuals or groups of individuals, others seek to broaden coverage under the retirement system and still others relate to survivors' benefits. All are complex.

To deal intelligently with the pension system, all the facts must be available. The Commission has had neither the

time nor the facilities to obtain the information necessary to act with wisdom and foresight on 86 bills of so technical a nature.

That is not to say that none of these bills is without merit. Each was filed by an interested individual who unquestionably felt that the proposal he sponsored warranted action by the General Court of Massachusetts.

All may be worthy of enactment into law. The Commission does not know and could not find out in the brief period of time and limited resources allotted to it.

The Commission believes that a definite step should be taken to provide technical assistance, not only for future commissions dealing with the complexities of the retirement system but for the legislative committee on pensions and old age assistance whose duty it is to pass on all pension and retirement bills regardless of their nature.

The Commission therefore suggests that an assistant be appointed to the Legislative Research Bureau who is qualified by education, training and experience to conduct studies of the laws relating to retirement systems and pensions.

That assistant should devote his entire time to those duties. He should attend all meetings of the committee on pensions and old age assistance and file written reports as to the cost and effect of any matter relating to retirement systems and pensions.

Legislation to make this possible is beyond the scope of this Commission's powers. The members of the Commission, however, have filed a bill, House, No. 1225, to bring it about and urge most strongly that it be given every consideration.

The establishment of such a post would mean that the Legislature would be kept informed of the merits of all pension and retirement bills and their effect on the retirement system.

Future commissions would not be faced with the problem of attempting to analyze a large number of complicated bills in a period of weeks with limited resources.

The Commission makes no recommendation on any of the 86 measures referred to it. It is the consensus of a majority

of the members that the Legislature should be guided by the advice of the retirement expert whose appointment the Commission recommends.

Respectfully submitted,

PHILIP A. GRAHAM.
PAUL H. BENOIT.
THEOPHILE J. DESROCHES.
ARCHIBALD E. KENEFICK.
WALTER W. O'BRIEN.
HARRY M. LACK.
MRS. JOHN C. STARR.
ANTHONY J. STONINA.
JOHN J. CAVANAUGH.

