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**GOVERNMENT CODE - GOV**

**TITLE 3. GOVERNMENT OF COUNTIES [23000 - 33205]** ( Title 3 added by Stats. 1947, Ch. 424. )

**DIVISION 4. EMPLOYEES [31000 - 33017]** ( Division 4 added by Stats. 1947, Ch. 424. )

**PART 3. RETIREMENT SYSTEMS [31200 - 33017]** ( Part 3 added by Stats. 1947, Ch. 424. )

**CHAPTER 3. County Employees Retirement Law of 1937 [31450 - 31898]** ( Chapter 3 added by Stats. 1947, Ch. 424. )

**ARTICLE 16.5. Cost of Living Adjustment [31870 - 31874.6]** ( Article 16.5 added by Stats. 1965, Ch. 159. )

**31870.** The board shall before April 1 of each year determine whether there has been an increase or decrease in the cost of living as provided in this section. Notwithstanding Section 31481 or any other provision of this chapter (commencing with Section 31450), every retirement allowance, optional death allowance, or annual death allowance payable to or on account of any member, of this system or a superseded system, who retires or dies or who has retired or died shall, as of April 1st of each year, be increased or decreased by a percentage of the total allowance then being received found by the board to approximate to the nearest one-half of 1 percent the percentage of annual increase or decrease in the cost of living as of January 1st of each year as shown by the then current Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for the area in which the county seat is situated, but such change shall not exceed 2 percent per year; however, the amount of any cost-of-living increase or decrease in any year which is not met by the maximum annual change of 2 percent in allowances shall be accumulated to be met by increases or decreases in allowances in future years; except that no decrease shall reduce the allowance below the amount being received by the member or his beneficiary on the effective date of the allowance or the application of this article, whichever is later.

(Amended by Stats. 1978, Ch. 900.)

**31870.01.** (a) The board of retirement shall, before April 1 of each year, determine whether there has been an increase or decrease in the cost-of-living as provided in this section. Notwithstanding Section 31481 or any other provision of this chapter, every retirement allowance, optional death allowance, or annual death allowance payable to or on account of any member, of this system or a superseded system, who retires or dies or who has retired or died shall, as of April 1st of each year, be increased or decreased to the nearest one-tenth of 1 percent, by 40 percent of the annual increase or decrease in the cost-of-living as of January 1st of each year as shown by the then current (year ending December) Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for the United States City Average, except that no decrease shall reduce the allowance below the amount being received by the member or his or her beneficiary on the effective date of the allowance.

(b) The allowance shall be increased a minimum of 2 percent in any year in which the board's determination of cost-of-living change of allowance would result in less, provided that the member or beneficiary has an accumulated unpaid cost-of-living account sufficient to provide the 2 percent increase.

(c) When this section becomes applicable in a county, the accumulated unpaid cost-of-living account of each retired member or beneficiary under the superseded Section 31870, shall be transferred to a like account under this section. Thereafter, no increases shall be made to such account.

(d) The board of retirement may adopt this section to be effective in lieu of Section 31870, provided, that no increase in unfunded actuarial liability nor in current member or employer contributions to the system are required as a result of the adoption and is so attested by an enrolled actuary. After adoption, the effective date for increases or decreases in allowances pursuant to this section shall be the next succeeding April 1.

(e) This section shall apply only in a county of the first class, as established by Sections 28020 and 28022, as amended by Chapter 1204 of the Statutes of 1971.

(Added by Stats. 1987, Ch. 606, Sec. 1.)

**31870.1.** The board shall before April 1 of each year determine whether there has been an increase or decrease in the cost of living as provided in this section. Notwithstanding Section 31481 or any other provision of this chapter (commencing with Section 31450),

every retirement allowance, optional death allowance, or annual death allowance payable to or on account of any member, of this system or superseded system who retires or dies or who has retired or died shall, as of April 1st of each year, be increased or decreased by a percentage of the total allowance then being received found by the board to approximate to the nearest one-half of 1 percent, the percentage of annual increase or decrease in the cost of living as of January 1st of each year as shown by the then current Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for the area in which the county seat is situated, but such change shall not exceed 3 percent per year; however, the amount of any cost-of-living increase or decrease in any year which is not met by the maximum annual change of 3 percent in allowances shall be accumulated to be met by increases or decreases in allowances in future years; except that no decrease shall reduce the allowance below the amount being received by the member or his beneficiary on the effective date of the allowance or the application of this article, whichever is later.

*(Amended by Stats. 1978, Ch. 900.)*

**31870.11.** (a) The board of retirement shall, before April 1 of each year, determine whether there has been an increase or decrease in the cost-of-living as provided in this section. Notwithstanding Section 31481 or any other provision of this chapter, every retirement allowance, optional death allowance, or annual death allowance payable to or on account of any member, of this system or a superseded system, who retires or dies or who has retired or died shall, as of April 1st of each year, be increased or decreased to the nearest one-tenth of 1 percent, by 60 percent of the annual increase or decrease in the cost-of-living as of January 1st of each year as shown by the then current (year ending December) Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for the United States City Average, except that no decrease shall reduce the allowance below the amount being received by the member or his or her beneficiary on the effective date of the allowance.

(b) The allowance shall be increased a minimum of 3 percent in any year in which the board's determination of cost-of-living change of allowance would result in less, provided that the member or beneficiary has an accumulated unpaid cost-of-living account sufficient to provide the 3 percent increase.

(c) When this section becomes applicable in a county, the accumulated unpaid cost-of-living account of each retired member or beneficiary under the superseded Section 31870.1, shall be transferred to a like account under this section. Thereafter, no increases shall be made to such account.

(d) The board of retirement may adopt this section to be effective in lieu of Section 31870.1, provided, that no increase in unfunded actuarial liability nor in current member or employer contributions to the system are required as a result of the adoption and is so attested by an enrolled actuary. After adoption, the effective date for increases or decreases in allowances pursuant to this section shall be the next succeeding April 1.

(e) This section shall apply only in a county of the first class, as established by Sections 28020 and 28022, as amended by Chapter 1204 of the Statutes of 1971.

*(Added by Stats. 1987, Ch. 606, Sec. 2.)*

**31870.2.** The board shall before April 1 of each year determine whether there has been an increase or decrease in the cost of living as provided in this section. Notwithstanding Section 31481 or any other provision of this chapter (commencing with Section 31450), every retirement allowance, optional death allowance, or annual death allowance payable to or on account of any member, of this system or superseded system who retires or dies or who has retired or died shall, as of April 1st of each year, be increased or decreased by a percentage of the total allowance then being received found by the board to approximate to the nearest one-half of 1 percent, the percentage of annual increase or decrease in the cost of living as of January 1st of each year as shown by the then current Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for the area in which the county seat is situated, but such change shall not exceed 5 percent per year; however, the amount of any cost-of-living increase or decrease in any year which is not met by the maximum annual change of 5 percent in allowances shall be accumulated to be met by increases or decreases in allowances in future years; except that no decrease shall reduce the allowance below the amount being received by the member or his beneficiary on the effective date of the allowance or the application of this section, whichever is later.

*(Amended by Stats. 1978, Ch. 900.)*

**31870.3.** Notwithstanding Section 31870.1, the board shall, before April 1st of each year, determine whether there has been an increase or decrease in the cost of living as provided in this section. Notwithstanding Section 31481 or any other provision of this chapter, every retirement allowance, optional death allowance, or annual death allowance payable to, or on account of, any member of this system who was covered under Section 31751 who retires or dies, or who has retired or died, shall, as of April 1st of each year, be increased or decreased by a percentage of the total allowance then being received found by the board to approximate to the nearest one-half of 1 percent, the percentage of annual increase or decrease in the cost of living as of January 1st of each year as shown by the then current Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for the area in which the county seat is situated, but such change shall not exceed 4 percent per year; however, the amount of any cost of living increase or decrease in any year which is not met by the maximum annual change of 4 percent in allowances shall be accumulated to be met by increases or decreases in allowances in future years; except that no decrease shall reduce the allowance below the amount being received by the member or his beneficiary on the effective date of the allowance or the application of this section, whichever is later.

(Added by Stats. 1980, Ch. 58.)

**31870.4.** Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the accumulation established in Section 31870, 31870.1, 31870.2, or 31870.3 shall be computed by multiplying the existing accumulation from prior years by an amount equal to one plus the amount of any cost-of-living increase or decrease in the current year, and adding to this result the "accumulation adjustment," where "accumulation adjustment" means the amount of any cost-of-living increase or decrease in the current year that is not met by the maximum annual change in allowances provided in Section 31870, 31870.1, 31870.2, or 31870.3, whichever is applicable. At no time may the accumulation established in Section 31870, 31870.1, 31870.2, or 31870.3 be less than zero.

This section shall not be operative in any county until it is adopted by a majority vote of the board of supervisors. Upon adoption of this section by the board of supervisors, the accumulation of each member under Section 31870, 31870.1, 31870.2, or 31870.3, whichever is applicable, shall be recomputed as if this section had been in effect on the member's date of retirement.

(Added by Stats. 2001, Ch. 239, Sec. 1. Effective January 1, 2002.)

**31871.** Any increases in allowances which are based upon service rendered prior to the applicable date of this article (as fixed pursuant to Section 31874) shall be funded insofar as possible from the moneys in the reserve described in Section 31592 which are in excess of one (1) percent of the assets of the retirement system; except that in counties which have applied Section 31592.2 the board of supervisors may fund all or part of the increases from the county general fund.

(Amended by Stats. 1987, Ch. 162, Sec. 1.)

**31872.** Any such increases in allowances which are not funded as provided in Section 31871 and any such increases which are based upon service rendered after the applicable date of this article (as fixed pursuant to Section 31874) shall be funded by contributions set by the board, as it determines necessary.

(Added by Stats. 1965, Ch. 159.)

**31873.** (a) Any increases in contributions shall be shared equally between the county or district and the contributing members, with the individual member's contributions based upon the member's age at his or her nearest birthday at time of entrance into the retirement system or based on a single rate of contributions pursuant to Section 31621.11, 31639.26, or as otherwise authorized by this chapter or the California Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2013. The board of supervisors by a majority vote may elect to pay part of the costs of the contributions which would otherwise be assessed to the individual members.

(b) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), pursuant to Section 7522.30, the board of supervisors shall not pay any part of the costs of the member contributions of new members as defined in subdivision (f) of Section 7522.04.

(Amended by Stats. 2013, Ch. 247, Sec. 47. (AB 1380) Effective January 1, 2014.)

**31873.1.** (a) Any cost-of-living contributions required for benefits under Section 31870.3 shall be shared equally between the county or district and the contributing members. The individual member's contributions shall be based upon the member's age at the member's nearest birthday at time of entrance into the retirement system, and shall be expressed as a percentage of the member's normal contribution rate. The board of supervisors by a majority vote may elect to pay all or part of the costs of the contributions which would otherwise be assessed to the individual members.

(b) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), pursuant to Section 7522.30, the board of supervisors shall not pay any part of the costs of the member contributions of new members as defined in subdivision (f) of Section 7522.04.

(c) Until revised by subsequent actuarial studies, the member's cost-of-living contribution rate shall be 39.57 percent of the member's normal contribution rate. These initial cost-of-living contribution rates are shown in the following table, according to the member's age at the time of entry into the system:

Age of entry	Percentage
into system	of contribution
16 .....	1.16
17 .....	1.16
18 .....	1.16
19 .....	1.16
20 .....	1.16

21 .....	1.16
22 .....	1.16
23 .....	1.16
24 .....	1.16
25 .....	1.17
26 .....	1.17
27 .....	1.18
28 .....	1.18
29 .....	1.19
30 .....	1.20
31 .....	1.20
32 .....	1.21
33 .....	1.22
34 .....	1.23
35 .....	1.24
36 .....	1.25
37 .....	1.26
38 .....	1.27
39 .....	1.28
40 .....	1.29
41 .....	1.30
42 .....	1.31
43 .....	1.32
44 .....	1.33
45 .....	1.34
46 .....	1.36
47 .....	1.37
48 .....	1.38
49 .....	1.40
50 .....	1.41
51 .....	1.43
52 .....	1.44
53 .....	1.46

54 and over .....	1.47
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*(Amended by Stats. 2013, Ch. 247, Sec. 48. (AB 1380) Effective January 1, 2014.)*

**31874.** This article (commencing with Section 31870) may be made applicable in any county on the date specified in the ordinance, or if no such date is specified, on the first day of the month after the effective date of an ordinance adopted by the board of supervisors to this effect, provided that an actuarial survey of the retirement system has been made by the adopting county prior to the passage of said ordinance. No provision of this chapter shall prevent or be construed to prevent the use and expenditure of surplus described in Section 31592.2 to fund any part or all of any increases in allowances otherwise permitted after this article or Article 16.6 (commencing with Section 31875) or both this article and Article 16.6 or any of the provisions of this article or Article 16.6 have been made applicable.

Except in a county of the first class, upon adoption by a county providing increases in allowances pursuant to this article, of Article 5.5 (commencing with Section 31510) of this chapter, only that portion of the increases in allowances which is paid from surplus earnings described in Section 31592.2 shall be paid, instead, from the Supplemental Retiree Benefits Reserve established pursuant to Section 31510.8.

*(Amended by Stats. 1983, Ch. 886, Sec. 10.)*

**31874.1.** Whenever the percentage of annual increase in the cost of living as of January 1st of each year as shown by the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers exceeds 3 percent, all or part of such excess over 3 percent shall be applied to the retirement allowances, optional death allowances or annual death allowances increased in Section 31870 or 31870.1. The board of supervisors shall determine the amount of such excess to be applied, and the cost of the increases in allowances provided shall be paid from county and district contributions.

This section shall not be operative in any county until it is adopted by a majority vote of the board of supervisors.

*(Amended by Stats. 1978, Ch. 900.)*

**31874.2.** The board of supervisors in any county, by a majority vote, may enact an ordinance providing that the maximum annual change pursuant to this article shall be increased to 4, 5, or 6 percent, as determined by the board, on the operative date of such ordinance.

*(Added by Stats. 1974, Ch. 343.)*

**31874.3.** (a) (1) Whenever the percentage of annual increase in the cost of living as of January 1 of each year as shown by the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers exceeds the maximum benefit increase provided in Section 31870, 31870.1, 31870.2, or 31870.3, whichever is applicable, the board of retirement may provide that all or part of the excess percentage increase shall be applied to the retirement allowances, optional death allowances, or annual death allowances increased in Section 31870, 31870.1, 31870.2, or 31870.3. The board shall determine the amount of the excess to be applied, which amount shall not exceed an amount that can be paid from earnings of the retirement fund that are in excess of the total interest credited to contributions and reserves plus 1 percent of the total assets of the retirement fund.

(2) The supplemental increases in excess of the increases applied to the retirement allowances, optional death allowances, or annual death allowances pursuant to Section 31870, 31870.1, 31870.2, or 31870.3 shall not become a part of the retirement allowances, optional death allowances, or annual death allowances to be increased by subsequent increases under Section 31870, 31870.1, 31870.2, or 31870.3.

(3) This subdivision shall be operative in any county that has elected by a majority vote of the board of supervisors to make either Section 31870, 31870.1, 31870.2, or 31870.3 applicable in that county.

(b) (1) The board of retirement may, instead of taking action pursuant to subdivision (a), provide supplemental cost-of-living increases, effective on a date to be determined by the board, to the retirement allowances, optional death allowances, or annual death allowances increased in Section 31870, 31870.1, 31870.2, or 31870.3; provided however, that only those members shall be eligible for this increase whose accumulations established by Section 31870, 31870.1, 31870.2, or 31870.3 shall equal or exceed 20 percent as of January 1 of the year in which the board of retirement adopts an increase under this subdivision.

(2) The supplemental increases to the retirement allowances, optional death allowances or annual death allowances increased in Section 31870, 31870.1, 31870.2, or 31870.3 shall not become a part of the retirement allowances, optional death allowances or annual death allowances to be increased by subsequent increases under Section 31870, 31870.1, 31870.2, or 31870.3.

(3) This subdivision shall be operative in any county that has elected by a majority vote of the board of supervisors to make either Section 31870, 31870.1, 31870.2, or 31870.3 applicable in that county.

(c) (1) The board of retirement may, instead of taking action pursuant to subdivision (a) or (b), provide supplemental cost-of-living increases, on a prefunded basis and effective on a date to be determined by the board, to the retirement allowances, optional death allowances, or annual death allowances increased in Section 31870, 31870.1, 31870.2, or 31870.3; provided however, only those members shall be eligible for this increase whose accumulations established by Section 31870, 31870.1, 31870.2, or 31870.3 equal or exceed 20 percent as of January 1 of the year in which the board of retirement takes action pursuant to this subdivision.

(2) The supplemental increases to the retirement allowances, optional death allowances, or annual death allowances increased in Section 31870, 31870.1, 31870.2, or 31870.3 shall become a part of the retirement allowances, optional death allowances, or annual death allowances and shall serve to reduce the accumulations established by Section 31870, 31870.1, 31870.2, or 31870.3, as applicable, by the same percentage as the payment that is made pursuant to this section.

(3) Before the board of retirement provides benefits pursuant to this subdivision, the costs of the benefits shall be determined by a qualified actuary and the board of retirement shall, with the advice of the actuary, provide for the full funding of the benefits utilizing funds in the reserve against deficiencies established pursuant to Section 31592.2, using surplus earnings that exceed 1 percent of the total assets of the retirement system.

(4) This subdivision shall be operative in any county that has elected by a majority vote of the board of supervisors to make either Section 31870, 31870.1, 31870.2, or 31870.3 applicable in that county.

(d) Upon adoption by any county providing benefits pursuant to this section, of Article 5.5 (commencing with Section 31610) of this chapter, the board of retirement shall, instead, pay those benefits from the Supplemental Retiree Benefit Reserve established pursuant to Section 31618.

*(Amended by Stats. 2000, Ch. 317, Sec. 4. Effective January 1, 2001.)*

**31874.4.** Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the board of supervisors in a county of the 10th class may provide in any ordinance implementing any section in this article that the provision of this article requiring unused increases or decreases in any year to be accumulated for future years shall not apply to those employees and officials specified in the ordinance.

*(Added by Stats. 1992, Ch. 707, Sec. 5. Effective September 15, 1992.)*

**31874.5.** (a) Whenever the percentage of annual increase in the cost of living as of January 1 of each year as shown by the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers exceeds a full 3 percent of the existing cost-of-living increase factor provided by any provision of this article, an additional 1 percent of the excess for each full 3 percent over the existing increase factor shall be applied to the retirement allowances, optional death allowances, or annual death allowances increased by any provision of this article. The increases in allowances resulting from the adoption of this section shall be used to offset any accumulated carryover balances under existing cost-of-living adjustments. The cost of implementing this section shall be prefunded commencing with the adoption of this section by the board of supervisors. The method of paying the cost of implementing this section may be mutually agreed to in a memorandum of understanding executed by the employer and employee representatives. The board of retirement shall conduct the actuarial studies to determine those costs.

(b) This section shall not be operative in any county until it is adopted by a majority vote of the board of supervisors.

(c) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), a memorandum of understanding regarding the application of the contributions of new members, as defined in subdivision (f) of Section 7522.04, towards paying the cost of the additional cost-of-living adjustment shall not conflict with the requirements of Section 7522.30 or as may be agreed to in accordance with Sections 7522.30 and 31631.

*(Amended by Stats. 2013, Ch. 247, Sec. 49. (AB 1380) Effective January 1, 2014.)*

**31874.6.** (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, on an annual basis, the board of retirement may, with the approval of the county board of supervisors, grant a cost-of-living adjustment on a prefunded basis to the retirement allowances, optional death allowances, or annual death allowances payable to or on account of eligible members. The action by the board of retirement may specify a date as of which the adjustment shall be effective and, if no effective date is specified, the adjustment shall be made in allowances payable for the time commencing on the first day of the month following the action by the board of retirement or approval by the county board of supervisors, whichever is later.

(b) Before the board of retirement may grant an adjustment pursuant to this section, the total costs of the adjustment shall be determined by a qualified actuary and the board shall determine, with the advice of the actuary, that full funding of the adjustment can be provided from earnings of the retirement fund that are in excess of the total interest credited to contributions and reserves plus 1 percent of the total assets of the retirement fund.

(c) The adjustment provided by this section shall be payable only to those retired members, survivors, beneficiaries, or successors in interest whose accumulated loss of purchasing power equals or exceeds 20 percent as of January 1 of the year the board of retirement takes action pursuant to this section. Loss of purchasing power shall be determined by the board of retirement based on the difference between the following:

(1) The initial retirement allowance, optional death allowance, or annual death allowance as it would have been increased by the cumulative total effect of the annual changes, rounded to the nearest one-half of 1 percent, in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for the area in which the county seat is situated.

(2) The retirement allowance, optional death allowance, or annual death allowance as actually increased by cost-of-living adjustments previously granted with respect to the allowance.

(d) A cost-of-living adjustment granted pursuant to this section shall become part of the retirement allowance, optional death allowance, or annual death allowance to be increased by any subsequent cost-of-living adjustments. The granting of an increase pursuant to this section in any particular year does not create any continuing entitlement to additional increases in subsequent years, and does not create any claim by a retired member, survivor, beneficiary, or successor in interest against the county, district, or retirement fund for any increase in any allowance paid or payable prior to the effective date of the action by the board of retirement pursuant to this section.

(e) This section shall only be applicable in the following counties:

(1) A county of the 19th class, as defined by Sections 28020 and 28040, as amended by Chapter 1204 of the Statutes of 1971.

(2) A county of the 32nd class, as defined by Sections 28020 and 28053, as amended by Chapter 1204 of the Statutes of 1971.

*(Amended by Stats. 2008, Ch. 202, Sec. 1. Effective January 1, 2009.)*