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Senators Approve GERS Fast-Track Disability Process, Honor NCSL on 50th Anniversary

Senator Milton Potter's bill to reduce GERS processing delays received strong support from colleagues and the retirement board, while another resolution celebrated the 50-year milestone of the National Conference of State Legislatures.

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Senator Milton Potter presents legislation to streamline GERS disability annuity approvals. By. V.I. LEGISLATURE.

Two bills cleared the Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs and Consumer Protection on Monday, including one aimed at streamlining disability annuity approvals within the Government Employees' Retirement System (GERS), and another commending the National

Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) on its 50th anniversary.

The first measure, [Bill 36-0012](#), was sponsored by Senator Milton Potter and seeks to eliminate unnecessary administrative delays in the GERS disability annuity process. “In a nutshell, it reduces the bureaucratic delays,” Senator Potter said. “The bill eliminates unnecessary administrative steps by allowing clear-cut disability cases as certified by qualified physicians to bypass the Committee of Medical Review.”

He further noted that the bill would ensure “that medical expertise rather than bureaucratic procedure is the decisive factor in disability determinations.”

Support for the measure came from the GERS Board. Chair Dwane Callwood explained that currently, all disability annuity applicants are sent—at the system’s expense—for evaluation by medical specialists. The findings are forwarded to the Medical Review Committee, which then interviews applicants and issues a recommendation to the Board of Trustees.

Senator Potter’s legislation, Callwood said, would create a “fast track” that shortens the application timeline by months, reduces financial strain on applicants, and saves GERS thousands of dollars per case. “In instances where the application has not garnered sufficient support from GERS-selected physicians, the Medical Review Committee step would remain in place,” he added.

Senator Franklin Johnson expressed immediate support for the bill and asked for specifics regarding cost savings. Mr. Callwood responded that a single case could cost between \$8,000 and \$9,000 per meeting, factoring in payments to doctors and other personnel involved in the review process.

The committee also gave unanimous support to [Bill 36-0097](#), a resolution recognizing the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) on its 50th anniversary. The resolution, also sponsored by Senator Potter, acknowledges NCSL’s contributions to the legislative process in the United States and its territories.

“Passing this resolution would put us in the company of legislatures from virtually every single U.S. state and territory in recognizing this vital organization,” Senator Potter said.

Senator Novelle Francis praised the NCSL as a collaborative body that fosters legislative innovation and unity. “They’re a research conglomerate of state legislators that really come together at conferences that we attend [and] really creates a think tank and a common cause among legislators,” he said.

Senator Carla Joseph added, “This organization plays such a critical role in our development and research of legislation that is meaningful to our people of the Virgin Islands.”

Both bills now advance to the Committee on Rules and Judiciary for further consideration.