By:  Flores S.B. No. 1570

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the effect of certain felony convictions of certain corrections employees.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1.  Chapter 810, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 810.004 to read as follows:

Sec. 810.004.  CERTAIN CORRECTIONS EMPLOYEES INELIGIBLE FOR RETIREMENT ANNUITY. (a)  In this section:

(1)  "Governing body of a public retirement system" and "public retirement system" have the meanings assigned by Section 802.001.

(2)  "Qualifying felony" means any felony involving an incarcerated member of a criminal street gang as defined by Section 71.01, Penal Code, including:

(A)  bribery;

(B)  the embezzlement, extortion, or other theft of public money;

(C)  perjury;

(D)  engaging in organized criminal activity;

(E)  tampering with governmental record;

(F)  misuse of official information;

(G)  abuse of official capacity; or

(H)  conspiracy or the attempt to commit any of the offenses described by Paragraphs (A)-(G).

(b)  This section applies only to a person who is:

(1)  a member of the employee class of the Employees Retirement System of Texas as described by Section 812.003 because the person serves as a corrections officer for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice or the Texas Juvenile Justice Department; or

(2)  otherwise eligible for membership in a public retirement system wholly or partly because the person served as a corrections officer for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice or the Texas Juvenile Justice Department.

(c)  Except as provided by Subsection (d), a member of a public retirement system is not eligible to receive a service retirement annuity under the retirement system if the member is convicted of a qualifying felony for conduct arising directly from the member's service as a corrections officer.

(d)  The retirement system, on receipt of notice of a conviction under Subsection (j), any similar notice of a conviction of a qualifying felony from a United States district court or United States attorney, or any other information that the retirement system determines by rule is sufficient to establish a conviction of a qualifying felony, shall suspend payments of a service retirement annuity to a person the system determines is ineligible to receive the annuity under Subsection (c). A person whose conviction is overturned on appeal or who meets the requirements for innocence under Section 103.001(a)(2), Civil Practice and Remedies Code:

(1)  is entitled to receive an amount equal to the accrued total of payments and interest earned on the payments withheld during the suspension period; and

(2)  may resume receipt of annuity payments on payment to the retirement system of an amount equal to the contributions refunded to the person under Subsection (e).

(e)  A member who is ineligible to receive a service retirement annuity under Subsection (c) is entitled to a refund of the member's service retirement annuity contributions, including interest earned on those contributions. A refund under this subsection is subject to an award of all or part of the member's service retirement annuity contributions to a former spouse, including as a just and right division of the contributions on divorce, payment of child support, or payment of spousal maintenance or contractual alimony or other order of a court.

(f)  Benefits payable to an alternate payee under Chapter 804 who is recognized by a qualified domestic relations order established before the effective date of this subsection are not affected by a member's ineligibility to receive a service retirement annuity under Subsection (c).

(g)  On conviction of a member for a qualifying felony:

(1)  a court may, in the same manner as in a divorce or annulment proceeding, make a just and right division of the member's service retirement annuity by awarding to the member's spouse all or part of the community property interest in the annuity forfeited by the member; and

(2)  a court shall, if the member's service retirement annuity was partitioned or exchanged by written agreement of the spouses as provided by Subchapter B, Chapter 4, Family Code, before the member's commission of the offense, award the annuity forfeited by the member to the member's spouse as provided in the agreement.

(h)  Ineligibility for a service retirement annuity under this section does not impair a person's right to any other retirement benefit for which the person is eligible.

(i)  The governing body of a public retirement system shall adopt rules and procedures to implement this section.

(j)  A court shall notify the retirement system of the terms of a conviction of a person convicted of an offense described by Subsection (c).

(k)  Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, if the spouse of a member convicted of a qualifying felony is convicted of the felony as a party to the offense as defined by Section 7.01, Penal Code, or of another qualifying offense arising out of the same criminal episode as defined by Section 3.01, Penal Code, the spouse forfeits the member's service retirement annuity and service retirement contributions to the same extent as the member.

SECTION 2.  Article 42.01, Code of Criminal Procedure, is amended by adding Section 14 to read as follows:

Sec. 14.  In addition to the information described by Section 1, the judgment should reflect affirmative findings entered pursuant to Article 42.0193.

SECTION 3.  Chapter 42, Code of Criminal Procedure, is amended by adding Article 42.0193 to read as follows:

Art. 42.0193.  FINDING REGARDING OFFENSE RELATED TO CONDUCT OF CERTAIN CORRECTIONS EMPLOYEES. (a)  In the trial of an offense described by Section 810.004, Government Code, the judge shall make an affirmative finding of fact and enter the affirmative finding in the judgment in the case if the judge determines that the defendant is:

(1)  a member of the employee class described by Section 810.004(b)(1), Government Code, while a member of the Employees Retirement System of Texas because the person serves as a corrections officer for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice or the Texas Juvenile Justice Department; or

(2)  otherwise eligible for membership in a public retirement system wholly or partly because the person served as a corrections officer for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice or the Texas Juvenile Justice Department.

(b)  A judge who makes the affirmative finding described by this article shall make the determination and provide the notice required by Section 810.004(j), Government Code.

SECTION 4.  Section 810.002, Government Code, as added by Chapter 443 (S.B. 500), Acts of the 85th Legislature, Regular Session, 2017, is redesignated as Section 810.003, Government Code.

SECTION 5.  Section 810.004, Government Code, as added by this Act, applies only to a member of a public retirement system who serves as a corrections officer and, on or after the effective date of this Act, commits an offense that is a qualifying felony as defined by that section. A person who commits a qualifying felony before the effective date of this Act is subject to the law in effect on the date the offense was committed, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose. For purposes of this section, an offense was committed before the effective date of this Act if any element of the offense occurred before that date.

SECTION 6.  This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2019.