

(S. B. 632)

(No. 156-2019)

(Approved October 22, 2019)

AN ACT

To amend Section 2.04 (1) (a) of Act No. 26-2017, as amended, known as the “Fiscal Plan Compliance Act,” in order to include the employees of the Bureau of the Puerto Rico Medical Emergency Corps and the Rangers Corps of the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources in the agencies excluded from the provisions of said Section; and for other related purposes.

STATEMENT OF MOTIVES

Act No. 20-2017, as amended, known as the “Puerto Rico Department of Public Safety Act,” was enacted as part of the public policy of the Government for the purpose of integrating all of the Island’s public safety agencies, including the Bureau of the Puerto Rico Medical Emergency Corps. Subsequently, Act No. 26-2017, as amended, known as the “Fiscal Plan Compliance Act,” was approved, which reduced the fringe benefits granted to public employees except for teachers and police officers. Act No. 103-2017 was approved recently to include the employees of the Firefighters Corps among the exempt employees. However, the employees of the Puerto Rico Medical Emergency Corps, which are part of the Department of Public Safety, were not included therein, even when they carry out tasks and discharge duties that leave them just as vulnerable to diseases and work-related accidents, as the rest of the exempted employees. All of these reasons coupled with other risks and dangers they face place them in similar working conditions. Nevertheless, their right to receive equal treatment regarding this benefit is not recognized.

The Emergency Medical Technicians of the Puerto Rico Medical Emergency Corps work in different scenarios and are exposed to a range of situations that pose a risk to their health and physical integrity, namely, communicable diseases, motor vehicle collisions, scenes with multiple victims, among others. For such reason, this Legislative Assembly deems it meritorious to do justice to the Emergency Medical Technicians of the Bureau given the nature of their work they perform. For all of the foregoing, and for the wellbeing and health of the people of Puerto Rico, these public servants should receive the same treatment granted to police officers and firefighters.

Likewise, in keeping with the protection of public employees whose duties pose a risk to their physical and emotional health, thus warranting a higher degree of protection, the employees of the Rangers Corps of the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources require that same protection and guarantee that they shall accrue leaves and be able to use them in the event they suffer a serious accident or injury in the line of duty given all the risks to which they are exposed.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF PUERTO RICO:

Section 1.- Section 2.04 (1) (a) of Act No. 26-2017, as amended, is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Section 2.04- Fringe Benefits

The fringe benefits of the employees of the Executive Branch shall be:

1. Vacation Leave

a. As of the effectiveness of this Act, every government employee shall be entitled to accrue one and one-fourth (1¼) day of vacation leave for every month of service. This provision shall not apply to teaching personnel and school principals, except for the administrative and managerial personnel of the Department of Education, nor to teaching personnel of any educational institution of the Government of Puerto Rico, certified teachers of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration, the law

enforcement officers of the Puerto Rico Police Bureau, the employees of the Correctional Officers Corps of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, the employees rendering services under the ranking system of the Puerto Rico Firefighters Corps, the employees of the Rangers Corps of the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources, and the employees of the Bureau of the Puerto Rico Medical Emergency Corps, who shall continue to accrue vacation leave as they did prior to the approval of this Act.

...”

Section 2.- This Act shall take effect immediately after its approval.