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## RULE 17-1 MANIFEST INJUSTICE

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### I. ~~BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE.~~

The 89<sup>th</sup> General Assembly provided the ATRS Board the extraordinary remedy of waiving any rule, provision, or law that does not violate a federal law or rule in order to prevent a manifest injustice to a member, benefit participant, ATRS employer, or ATRS. Act 303 of 2013 grants that authority to the Board, and is codified at A.C.A. § 24-7-205 as follows:

*~~"(e) The board or its designee may waive or modify the impact of a rule, provision, or law that does not violate federal law or jeopardize the taxqualified status of the system to correct or prevent a **manifest injustice** (emphasis added) that would affect the system, benefit participant, or employer in a particular instance."~~*

The definition of manifest injustice can be found at Ark. Code. Ann 24-7202(40)(A) as follows:

*~~"(40)(A) "Manifest injustice" means an obvious unfairness that has a direct and observable unconscionable effect that will occur as a result of a technical error or error of judgment, when the error made by the system, a benefit participant, or employer, and the disparity of outcome to the parties, when taken together and supported by clear and convincing evidence, show a great harm to the integrity of the system as a whole, the benefit participant, or an employer, unless the system is afforded the discretion to resolve the matter in a fair manner.~~*

*~~(B) In determining manifest injustice the system may consider:~~*

- ~~(i) The degree of fault of the system, benefit participant, or employer;~~*
- ~~(ii) An ambiguity in the interpretation of the circumstances, rule, or law;~~*
- ~~(iii) The cost to the system of correcting the error that is far outweighed by the benefit afforded to the system, benefit participant, or employer;~~*

- (iv) Whether or not an expedited decision is in the public interest;*
- (v) The fundamental fairness of a remedy in a particular situation; and*
- (vi) Whether or not the status quo would result in an unconscionable outcome."*

## II. GENERAL

~~The process of declaring a manifest injustice is a rare and extraordinary remedy that shall not be used as a routine method of addressing error, oversight, or simple mistake. As an extraordinary remedy, manifest injustice shall be cautiously and carefully used to prevent unfairness, to preserve the integrity of ATRS, and to avoid or correct unduly harsh or unconscionable outcomes.~~

## III. DELEGATION TO ATRS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.

- A. ~~The ATRS Executive Director is hereby given authority to implement a resolution of a manifest injustice once a determination is made that a manifest injustice exists using the review process set forth herein. The Executive Director may implement a resolution of a manifest injustice of up to \$10,000 of direct financial impact to ATRS. The Executive Director is specifically prohibited from waiving any deadlines that may apply in the ATRS Rules or law. Any waiver of a deadline is exclusively a Board remedy and not a remedy available to the ATRS Executive Director. Provided however, if any resolution that has a direct financial impact of more than \$5,000, then ATRS Executive Director shall provide the Chair of the ATRS Board of Trustees written notice about the manifest injustice determination and proposed resolution prior to implementing the resolution.~~
- B. ~~The Executive Director is specifically prohibited from waiving any deadline that may apply in the ATRS Rules or law. A waiver of a deadline is exclusively a Board remedy and not a remedy available to the Executive Director.~~
- C. ~~The Executive Director shall provide a report to the Board at least biannually that outlines the facts and circumstances of each manifest injustice referral, sets forth the findings and recommendations of the Manifest Injustice Committee, and sets forth and explains the resolution of the manifest injustice, if a manifest injustice is found. Members' names or other information that is not material to the findings shall not be required in the report to the Board.~~

#### IV. ~~MANIFEST INJUSTICE COMMITTEE.~~

- A. ~~The ATRS General Counsel, Assistant Director of Fiscal Affairs, and Member Services Administrator shall act as a 3 person Manifest Injustice Committee (the "Committee") to review all manifest injustice referrals.~~
- i. ~~The Committee will meet on a reasonable schedule or as needed to review any referral.~~
  - ii. ~~A majority vote of the Committee shall constitute a recommendation on the referral.~~
  - iii. ~~The Committee shall make an initial recommendation to the Executive Director based upon its review of the referral regarding whether or not a manifest injustice exists. If a manifest injustice exists, then the Committee shall propose a resolution of the manifest injustice to the Executive Director.~~
- B. ~~If the Committee determines that no manifest injustice exists in a referral, then the Executive Director shall review the referral and the Committee's basis for the recommendation. The Executive Director may either accept the recommendation or return the referral to the Committee for further consideration.~~
- i. ~~If the Executive Director accepts the recommendation from the Committee, the discretionary review is officially ended and the matter is to be considered officially closed.~~
  - ii. ~~If the referral is returned to the Committee, the Committee shall consider the matter again in light of any additional information provided by the Executive Director. If the Committee's recommendation remains that no manifest injustice exists, the matter shall be considered officially closed, unless referred to the Board.~~
- C. ~~If the Committee determines that a manifest injustice does exist, then the Executive Director may implement the resolution suggested by the Committee or adopt an alternate resolution that falls within the Executive Director's delegated authority.~~
- D. ~~If the Executive Director disagrees with the Committee's determination that a manifest injustice exists, then the Executive Director may return the referral~~

~~for further consideration. If the Committee maintains the determination that a manifest injustice exists after the return of the referral, and the Executive Director continues to disagree, then the Executive Director may place the item on the Board agenda for the Board to consider and resolve, with input from both the Committee and Executive Director concerning the referral.~~

- ~~E. If a member of the Committee has a conflict or otherwise cannot act on a manifest injustice referral due to absence, sickness, or work load, a Committee member may appoint a representative from their Staff for a committee meeting.~~
- ~~F. A party may not administratively appeal a determination of a referral of manifest injustice, regardless of whether the determination occurs from the Executive Director's decision or through the Board's decision.~~

- ~~V. The Executive Director may suspend an Executive Director Review if a manifest injustice determination might resolve the issue within the Executive Director review. The Executive Director review shall not be suspended absent the consent of the affected party/parties in the Executive Director review.~~

## **VI. REFERRALS.**

- ~~A. A referral of a potential or alleged manifest injustice may be made to the Executive Director by any:
  - ~~i. ATRS Trustee; ii. ATRS Staff member, including the Executive Director; iii. Benefit Participant; iv. Beneficiary;~~
  - ~~v. ATRS covered Employer; or vi. Other interested party such as guardian or fiduciary.~~~~
- ~~B. A referral shall be made to the Executive Director in order to create and preserve an appropriate record with ATRS.
  - ~~i. Each referral shall be given a number and a year designation. For \_\_\_\_\_ example: "2013 MI 1, 2013 MI 2, 2013 MI 3" and so forth.~~
  - ~~ii. The Executive Director shall submit all referrals to the Committee.~~~~

- VII. ~~The Committee or the Executive Director may request that a party to a manifest injustice referral provide information or input concerning the referral. A party is not required to provide information.~~
- VIII. ~~A Board decision on a manifest injustice referral is a final discretionary decision and is not subject to further review.~~

~~Approved by Board: July 26, 2013~~

~~Adopted: October 9, 2013~~

~~Effective: November 8, 2013~~

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FILING PROPOSED RULES WITH  
THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

DEPARTMENT Legal  
BOARD/COMMISSION Arkansas Teacher Retirement System  
BOARD/COMMISSION DIRECTOR Mark White  
CONTACT PERSON Jennifer Liwo  
ADDRESS 1400 W. Third Street  
PHONE NO. (501) 682-1517 EMAIL jenniferl@artrs.gov  
NAME OF PRESENTER(S) AT SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING  
Mark White and Jennifer Liwo  
PRESENTER EMAIL(S) markw@artrs.gov and jenniferl@artrs.gov

**INSTRUCTIONS**

In order to file a proposed rule for legislative review and approval, please submit this Legislative Questionnaire and Financial Impact Statement, and attach (1) a summary of the rule, describing what the rule does, the rule changes being proposed, and the reason for those changes; (2) both a markup and clean copy of the rule; and (3) all documents required by the Questionnaire.

If the rule is being filed for permanent promulgation, please email these items to the attention of Rebecca Miller-Rice, [miller-ricer@blr.arkansas.gov](mailto:miller-ricer@blr.arkansas.gov), for submission to the Administrative Rules Subcommittee.

If the rule is being filed for emergency promulgation, please email these items to the attention of Director Marty Garrity, [garritym@blr.arkansas.gov](mailto:garritym@blr.arkansas.gov), for submission to the Executive Subcommittee.

Please answer each question completely using layman terms.

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1. What is the official title of this rule?  
Rule 17-1: Manifest Injustice
2. What is the subject of the proposed rule? Manifest injustice procedures.
3. Is this rule being filed under the emergency provisions of the Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act? Yes  No

*If yes, please attach the statement required by Ark. Code Ann. § 25-15-204(c)(1).*

If yes, will this emergency rule be promulgated under the permanent provisions of the Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act? Yes  No

4. Is this rule being filed for permanent promulgation? Yes  No

If yes, was this rule previously reviewed and approved under the emergency provisions of the Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act? Yes  No

If yes, what was the effective date of the emergency rule? \_\_\_\_\_

On what date does the emergency rule expire? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Is this rule required to comply with a *federal* statute, rule, or regulation? Yes  No

If yes, please provide the federal statute, rule, and/or regulation citation.

6. Is this rule required to comply with a *state* statute or rule? Yes  No

If yes, please provide the state statute and/or rule citation.

7. Are two (2) rules being repealed in accord with Executive Order 23-02? Yes  No

If yes, please list the rules being repealed.

If no, please explain.

Rule 17-1 is being repealed in its entirety.

8. Is this a new rule? Yes  No

Does this repeal an existing rule? Yes  No

If yes, the proposed repeal should be designated by strikethrough. If it is being replaced with a new rule, please attach both the proposed rule to be repealed and the replacement rule.

Is this an amendment to an existing rule? Yes  No

If yes, all changes should be indicated by strikethrough and underline. In addition, please be sure to label the markup copy clearly as the markup.

9. What is the state law that grants the agency its rulemaking authority for the proposed rule, outside of the Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act? Please provide the specific Arkansas Code citation(s), including subsection(s).

A.C.A. §§ 24-7-301 and 24-7-305(b).

10. Is the proposed rule the result of any recent legislation by the Arkansas General Assembly?  
Yes  No

If yes, please provide the year of the act(s) and act number(s).

11. What is the reason for this proposed rule? Why is it necessary?

Please see Section III of attached Executive Summary. The repeal of this rule is necessary for the orderly and proper operation and administration of the Arkansas Teacher Retirement System.



12. Please provide the web address by which the proposed rule can be accessed by the public as provided in Ark. Code Ann. § 25-19-108(b)(1).

<https://www.artrs.gov/board-rules>

13. Will a public hearing be held on this proposed rule? Yes  No

If yes, please complete the following:

Date: 02/05/2024

Time: 11:00 am

Place: Arkansas Teacher Retirement System, 1400 W. Third Street, Little Rock, AR 72201

*Please be sure to advise Bureau Staff if this information changes for any reason.*

14. On what date does the public comment period expire for the permanent promulgation of the rule? Please provide the specific date. 01/22/2024

15. What is the proposed effective date for this rule? 03/01/2024

16. Please attach (1) a copy of the notice required under Ark. Code Ann. § 25-15-204(a)(1) and (2) proof of the publication of that notice.

17. Please attach proof of filing the rule with the Secretary of State, as required by Ark. Code Ann. § 25-15-204(e)(1)(A).

18. Please give the names of persons, groups, or organizations that you anticipate will comment on these rules. Please also provide their position (for or against), if known.

[Members and staff of the Arkansas Teacher Retirement System.](#)

19. Is the rule expected to be controversial? Yes  No

If yes, please explain.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

**PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS COMPLETELY.**

**DEPARTMENT** Legal  
**BOARD/COMMISSION** Arkansas Teacher Retirement System  
**PERSON COMPLETING THIS STATEMENT** Jennifer Liwo  
**TELEPHONE NO.** (501) 682-1517 **EMAIL** jenniferl@artrs.gov

To comply with Ark. Code Ann. § 25-15-204(e), please complete the Financial Impact Statement and email it with the questionnaire, summary, markup and clean copy of the rule, and other documents. Please attach additional pages, if necessary.

**TITLE OF THIS RULE** Rule 17-1: Manifest Injustice

1. Does this proposed, amended, or repealed rule have a financial impact?  
Yes  No
  
2. Is the rule based on the best reasonably obtainable scientific, technical, economic, or other evidence and information available concerning the need for, consequences of, and alternatives to the rule?  
Yes  No
  
3. In consideration of the alternatives to this rule, was this rule determined by the agency to be the least costly rule considered? Yes  No   
  
If no, please explain:  
  
(a) how the additional benefits of the more costly rule justify its additional cost;  
  
(b) the reason for adoption of the more costly rule;  
  
(c) whether the reason for adoption of the more costly rule is based on the interests of public health, safety, or welfare, and if so, how; and  
  
(d) whether the reason for adoption of the more costly rule is within the scope of the agency's statutory authority, and if so, how.
  
4. If the purpose of this rule is to implement a *federal* rule or regulation, please state the following:  
  
(a) What is the cost to implement the federal rule or regulation? *n/a*

**Current Fiscal Year**

General Revenue \_\_\_\_\_  
 Federal Funds \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cash Funds \_\_\_\_\_  
 Special Revenue \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other (Identify) \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$0.00 \_\_\_\_\_

**Next Fiscal Year**

General Revenue \_\_\_\_\_  
 Federal Funds \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cash Funds \_\_\_\_\_  
 Special Revenue \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other (Identify) \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$0.00 \_\_\_\_\_

(b) What is the additional cost of the state rule?

**Current Fiscal Year**

General Revenue \_\_\_\_\_  
 Federal Funds \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cash Funds \_\_\_\_\_  
 Special Revenue \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other (Identify) \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$0.00 \_\_\_\_\_

**Next Fiscal Year**

General Revenue \_\_\_\_\_  
 Federal Funds \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cash Funds \_\_\_\_\_  
 Special Revenue \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other (Identify) \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$0.00 \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the total estimated cost by fiscal year to any private individual, private entity, or private business subject to the proposed, amended, or repealed rule? Please identify those subject to the rule, and explain how they are affected.

**Current Fiscal Year**

\$ 0.00 \_\_\_\_\_

n/a

**Next Fiscal Year**

\$ 0.00 \_\_\_\_\_

6. What is the total estimated cost by fiscal year to a state, county, or municipal government to implement this rule? Is this the cost of the program or grant? Please explain how the government is affected.

**Current Fiscal Year**

\$ 0.00 \_\_\_\_\_

n/a

**Next Fiscal Year**

\$ 0.00 \_\_\_\_\_

7. With respect to the agency's answers to Questions #5 and #6 above, is there a new or increased cost or obligation of at least one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) per year to a private individual, private entity, private business, state government, county government, municipal government, or to two (2) or more of those entities combined?

Yes  No

If yes, the agency is required by Ark. Code Ann. § 25-15-204(e)(4) to file written findings at the time of filing the financial impact statement. The written findings shall be filed simultaneously with the financial impact statement and shall include, without limitation, the following:

- (1) a statement of the rule's basis and purpose;
- (2) the problem the agency seeks to address with the proposed rule, including a statement of whether a rule is required by statute;
- (3) a description of the factual evidence that:
  - (a) justifies the agency's need for the proposed rule; and
  - (b) describes how the benefits of the rule meet the relevant statutory objectives and justify the rule's costs;
- (4) a list of less costly alternatives to the proposed rule and the reasons why the alternatives do not adequately address the problem to be solved by the proposed rule;
- (5) a list of alternatives to the proposed rule that were suggested as a result of public comment and the reasons why the alternatives do not adequately address the problem to be solved by the proposed rule;
- (6) a statement of whether existing rules have created or contributed to the problem the agency seeks to address with the proposed rule and, if existing rules have created or contributed to the problem, an explanation of why amendment or repeal of the rule creating or contributing to the problem is not a sufficient response; and
- (7) an agency plan for review of the rule no less than every ten (10) years to determine whether, based upon the evidence, there remains a need for the rule including, without limitation, whether:
  - (a) the rule is achieving the statutory objectives;
  - (b) the benefits of the rule continue to justify its costs; and
  - (c) the rule can be amended or repealed to reduce costs while continuing to achieve the statutory objectives.

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**December 20, 2023**

**Executive Summary**  
**Proposed Rule Repeal**  
**ATRS Rule 17-1 – Manifest Injustice**

**I. Purpose**

The Arkansas Teacher Retirement System (“ATRS” or “System”) requests the review and approval of the proposed repeal of ATRS Rule 17-1 – Manifest Injustice (“Rule 17-1”).

On December 4, 2023, the Board of Trustees of the Arkansas Teacher Retirement System (“Board”) voted to proceed with the repeal of Rule 17-1.

**II. Authority**

A.C.A. § 24-7-301 provides that the Board is responsible for the general administration and proper operation of the System and for implementing the Arkansas Teacher Retirement System Act, A.C.A. § 24-7-201 et seq.

A.C.A. § 24-7-305(b) gives the Board the authority to promulgate rules as it deems necessary from time to time in the transaction of its business and in administering the System.

**III. Repeal**

Rule 17-1 will be repealed and any provisions necessary to maintain will be transferred to Rule 13-1.

**IV. Recommendation**

The System recommends that the proposed repeal of Rule 17-1 be approved.