From:	Ian Longridge
To:	Rep. Laddie Shaw; Rep. Stanley Wright; Rep. Ben Carpenter; Rep. Craig Johnson; Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Jennie Armstrong; Rep. Andi Story
Subject:	HB22
Date:	Thursday, March 2, 2023 9:44:46 PM

Members of the State Affairs Committee,

My name is Ian Longridge, I am a firefighter in Fairbanks Alaska. I have been a firefighter in the Fairbanks area for 13 years. I was born and raised in Alaska. I am writing in support of HB22. This legislation is critical for Public Safety in Alaska because our current retirement plan, PERS Tier 4, sets public safety employees up for failure once we retire. Numerous projections, presented to the legislature, have shown that Tier 4 provides insufficient amounts of money during retirement which will likely result in those employees running out of money in retirement. This reality has helped push numerous Tier 4 employees out of the state, seeking employment in states that provide a reasonable retirement for their public safety employees. The end result of this is that Alaska's fire departments have become training centers for the lower 48. Changing the retirement system to the program defined in HB22 would help keep more employees in Alaska for the long term. The more public safety employees that stay in Alaska directly translates to cost savings for the State and local entities. Additionally, if public safety employees stay in Alaska for their entire careers the service level provided to the citizens of Alaska will be better. The failure of last session's HB55 drove numerous firefighters at my department, and in the State as a whole, to leave for jobs in the lower 48 in states that provide for the well being of their public safety professionals when they retire. If you vote against HB22 you should realize and accept that you are voting against the safety of every single citizen in this state. If you want Alaska to continue to receive quality fire, EMS and police services then you must give those employees and their families a reason to stay.

I implore you to pass HB22 out of the State Affairs Committee on its March 7th reading. Passing this bill will only help make Alaska a better place for its citizens.

Thank you,
Ian Longridge