From: Jeff Hall
To: Rep. Laddie Shaw
Subject: HB 22 support
Date: Sunday, March 5, 2023 4:21:44 PM

Hello, I'm writing in support of HB 22. This bill is important to myself, as a Paramedic/Firefighter, and many others who serve the public on a daily basis. House Bill 22 (HB 22) is the result of many years of work to fix a retirement system for public safety workers. Nearly half of public safety workers now fall into the Tier IV retirement system that lacks a defined benefit structure. This retirement system does not provide an adequate retirement for frontline public safety workers including firefighters, police officers, and State Troopers. This failing has real financial consequences for the state and local municipalities in the form of recruitment and retention.

The cost of training a new public safety member in the state is approximately $190,000. In the past, this cost was spread out over a 25-year career. Currently our well-trained public safety members are leave Alaska after just 5 years of service. This means that money which could be used for training and equipment is now being used to recruit and train new officers. Public safety departments now have less combined experience as they are forced to continually bring in and train new members. Without action from the legislature this problem, that affects nearly every public safety department within the state, will continue unabated.

HB 22 has the potential to stem the recruitment and retention crisis while also protecting the state from unfunded liability. It offers a conservative approach with modest benefits. These benefits will allow public safety departments throughout the state to attract and retain the best public safety employees possible. Public safety is a cause that affects every Alaskan. Having well-trained and experienced public safety employees benefits everyone. A defined retirement is a key factor for public safety employees who often have shorter careers due to the physical and emotional stressors of our jobs. I encourage you to support House Bill 22 which offers a practical solution to this growing problem and sets Alaska up to be a competitive recruiter of top public safety candidates again.

Thank you for your time and your consideration of this bill. Sincerely,

Jeff Hall