

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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SPONSOR STATEMENT FOR SENATE BILL 211 PERS Credit for Military Service

Members of the military who have been honorably discharged from the service and come to work for the state of Alaska are currently allowed to purchase qualifying time within the PERS system for their previous military service. Under current law, this purchased time may not be used to satisfy the credited service requirements for normal retirement. This exemption precludes persons from using their purchased time to qualify for health care benefits. Senate Bill 211 proposes that peace officers or firefighters be allowed to use the time they purchase to qualify for normal retirement.

A person who serves their country and returns to the state to pursue dangerous work as a peace officer or firefighter continues to represent the best in our community. Their service to protect others carries with it considerable risks and the physical demands placed upon them warrant special consideration in the development of Alaska's retirement and benefits system. Senate Bill 211 makes a minor modification to our retirement laws to allow a person to use their purchased service to qualify for normal retirement benefits. The intent of Senate Bill 211 is that people purchasing the service time bear the cost to the state that the additional benefits will create.

Senate Bill 211 creates an appropriate recognition of their service to their country and their state by ensuring they have a fair retirement to look forward to.