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District 24

SPONSOR STATEMENT FOR HOUSE BILL 116
PERS Credit for Military Service

Honorably discharged members of our nations' military service who 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. House Bill 116 proposes that peace officers or firefighters be allowed to use the time they purchase for normal retirement.

Already these brave individuals have served their country. They have then made a career providing public safety and rescue in one of the most hazardous working environments to be found. Their service to others, by placing themselves in harms way on a continuous basis, merits consideration in the development of Alaska's retirement and benefit system. House Bill 116 makes a minor, and tightly tailored, modification to our retirement laws to allow a person to use their purchased service to qualify for normal retirement benefits. The intent of House Bill 116 is that peace officers or firefighters who choose to purchase the service time bear the cost to the state that the additional benefits will create.

House Bill 116 creates an appropriate recognition of their service to their country and their state by ensuring the have a fair retirement in their future.