

Re: House Bill 66 Survivor Benefits Under the Public Employees' Retirement System of Alaska

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

For the record my name is Nikki Toll. I am testifying in support of HB66 on behalf of myself, my three sons, my late husband Tage Toll, and for the families of the Alaska State Troopers.

For those of you who do not know my story, my late husband was Alaska State Trooper Tage Toll. He was killed in the line of duty when Helo 1 crashed outside of Talkeetna during a successful search and rescue mission on March 30, 2013. Tage is an Alaskan hero.

As a family, we were well aware of the dangers that faced Tage when he went on duty. I had faith and confidence in his abilities to handle himself, and in the training and skills he had as a law enforcement officer. The reality, nothing prepared me for losing my best friend, the father of my three children, and the life I had dedicated nineteen years of my life.

Tage had been an Alaska State Trooper for ten years at the point of his death. Tage and I had chosen Alaska as our home. My boys and I continue to make that choice because it is a truly wonderful place. Tage served Alaska with Loyalty, Integrity, Courage, Compassion, Leadership, and Accountability.

When Tage was killed, I had one day of insurance coverage before, under current policy, it expired at the end of the month. Tage's body had not even been positively identified yet and my three boys and I were without insurance. It was only after piles of paperwork and corrections to an inaccurate death certificate, four months later, that I was able to have the coverage I have now through Retirement and Benefits, but at 100% of the cost to myself. The burden of grief was heavy enough without the added stress.

Additionally, the man who murdered Scott and Gabe and his father have cost free medical coverage during their time of incarceration. In contrast, Brandy and I were expected to carry the cost while working through the grief of rebuilding our

lives. Our husbands dedicated and gave their lives in the pursuit of justice, but this is an injustice.

HB66 is part of the solution for that injustice. HB66 remedies an oversight in Alaska's acknowledgement and honoring of its fallen heroes. It covers the cost of insurance for the families of those who have lost their lives in the line of duty. The Alaska State Troopers have taken a serious hit the past two years with the fatal losses of Tager, Trooper Gabe Rich and Sergeant Scott Johnson. Now, with budget cuts and the reduction of services, the men and women of your Alaska State Trooper community need the encouragement of knowing their families will be cared for if the worst happens to them in the line of duty.

Today I am asking for your support of HB66.

Thank you for your time, and consideration of this important piece of legislation.

Nikki Toll

677 W. Charlotte's Circle

Wasilla, AK 99654

907- 414-3893

907-376-2248

n.toll2@gmail.com