



Public Safety Employees Association, Inc.
"Representing Alaska's Finest"
A.F.S.C.M.E. Local 803



February 1st, 2017

This letter is in support of Representative Josephson's House Bill 23.

My name is Craig Lewis, and I am a Chapter President and a Corporate Board Vice President of the Public Safety Employees Association. PSEA represents employees of the Alaska Department of Public Safety, to include State Troopers, Court Service Officers, and Deputy Fire Marshals; Airport Police & Fire Officers with the Alaska Department of Transportation; and employees of seven municipal police departments around the State. I have been a police officer and a firefighter in Alaska since 2005.

During my ten years as a police officer, I have buried six fellow Alaskan Officers and Troopers killed in the line of duty. My friend Tony and his partner Matt were murdered in Hoonah; Tage was killed in a helicopter crash near Talkeetna with my friend Mel; my friends Scott and Gabe were murdered in Tanana; and my friend Alan was murdered in Fairbanks just this winter. Baring special action from the Governor or a City Council, survivors of peace officers and firefighters killed in the line of duty lose their health insurance at the end of the calendar month their loved one died in. COBRA coverage to continue employer insurance coverage is expensive, and only available for a maximum of three years.

We risk and give a lot to do these jobs, and our families often bear the burden—especially when we're gone. Helping care for those left behind when our peace officers and firefighters make the ultimate sacrifice is something we as a State can do to help in a time of great tragedy.

Thank you for your consideration.

Craig Lewis
Fairbanks, Alaska