

From: [Jared Albright](#)
To: [Rep. Neal Foster](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Jennifer Johnston](#); [Rep. Daniel Ortiz](#); [Rep. Andy Josephson](#); [Rep. Gary Knopp](#); [Rep. Bart LeBon](#); [Rep. Cathy Tilton](#); [Rep. Kelly Merrick](#); [Rep. Colleen Sullivan-Leonard](#); [Rep. Ben Carpenter](#); [Rep. Chuck Kopp](#)
Subject: HB79
Date: Tuesday, May 7, 2019 9:34:07 PM

Representatives,

My name is Jared Albright, I am a FireFighter Paramedic with the Anchorage Fire Department. I have been a Paramedic for 12 years, 8 of those with Anchorage Fire, educated at UAA and UOI to pressure being Paramedic and a lifelong Alaskan. I am writing in full support of HB79. I would like to strongly encourage the House Finance Committee to push for HB79 through the legislative process.

Tier IV will not suffice when it comes time to retire in EMS / Public Safety, and there are some important factors that play into this. Often times public safety employees have a statistically shorter career due to the high physical demands, stress related demands, overexposure to toxic environments as well as continuous infectious exposure the job requires. Considering this, we public safety (Tier IV) employees look at our current retirement plan with a great feeling of uncertainty when it comes time to conclude our careers. There are other states (Washington state for example) that continue to offer more substantial retirement plans, naturally attracting more people to the job and their state. Since I tested the first time in 2003 I can remember >1000 applicants attending the AFD test. The Tier IV implementation was around 2007 and since then candidate numbers have dramatically decreased. We now see approximately 300 people attending our hiring test. Our lack of a good retirement plan has the most substantial effect on attendance. It is worth it for people to move to another state that offers a better plan to support families when it comes time to retire. Other departments even offer lateral transfers from one department to another, and is how we have lost a few employees already.

We have less paramedics testing for Anchorage that in history, for example: there are only 2 in our current academy out of approximately 22 candidates. Simply because there are better job opportunities in the lower 48 for paramedics offering stronger retirement plans. This appears to be a large waste of money, training people just for them to leave within a year or two. There is nothing competitive about what we can offer employees, especially if we seek to pull people from the lower 48 to move to Alaska. This is a expensive place to live and for a family to move up here we need something better to offer and Tier IV is to blame.

Knowing numerous paramedics throughout the years, I know many that have simply chose different career paths secondary to the implementation of Tier IV, whether they moved out of state to another department or simply chose another job with higher pay to compensate retirement better. AFD has lost many paramedics to pursue different careers. Departments that offer more substantial retirement plans are becoming more attractive as Tier IV remains stagnant. If we had a retirement plan that was sufficient, this would have prevented departures, as well as many more within the past few years. Having an adequate retirement plan will help keep employees, boost recruitment, save money training employees that will now stay, and attract many from the lower 48. Tier IV is fiscally responsible for the loss of employees and will continue to be. HB79 is the answer, and can provide a solution to our ever growing turnover rate within our public safety employees. I am in full support of House Bill 79 and strongly encourage you to push HB79 through the legislative process.

Thank you for your time and help,
Jared Albright, MICP, NREMTP
Anchorage Fire Department