

4-18-2019

Representative Bart LeBon  
Alaska Representative District 1  
State Capitol, Room 418  
Juneau Alaska 99801

Dear Representative Bart LeBon,

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 79. I am a Police and Fire Officer at the Fairbanks International Airport, and have been in PERS since August of 2006. I am one of the first Alaska state employees to be in the Tier IV system, as Tier IV took effect on July 1<sup>st</sup> 2006.

I have seen the effects of Tier IV in the past 12 years, on both the recruitment and retention of qualified personnel. In a career that is rife with injuries and the possibilities of such, it is not realistic to expect most law enforcement and firefighters to be able to work in their chosen career to 65-67 years of age which is what a 401K type retirement is geared towards. Because of this, I have witnessed many officers leave for the greener pastures of a defined benefit retirement system of agencies in the lower 48.

Our department has lost many officers in my time here, two such officers to other departments in the past six months, both cases illustrating the scope of the problems with retention based on an inferior retirement system. Both left our department and the state expressly for a more favorable retirement system with other agencies. One officer had just over 1 year on, had just completed his training, and the state and the department recouped very little from the investment in training for this officer. Another officer had 7 years with our department, and his departure was a greater loss due to his experience and knowledge base leaving, and to a lesser extent the cost of training his replacement. As a field training officer, it is frustrating to be continually training new officers just to have them leave after a year or two.

I ask for your support for House Bill 79 and thank you for your work in Juneau.

Sincerely,

Peter Hawbaker  
Constituent District 1  
907-451-7199  
907-712-7599