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Representatives in the House Finance Committee
State Capitol
Juneau AK, 99801

Dear Representatives,

I am writing in support of House Bill No. 79 (HB79). I work for the Anchorage Fire Department and have been in the PERS Tier 4 system for approximately 12 years.

Prior to working for the Anchorage Fire Department, I was in construction. I eventually became a certified Police Officer and Firefighter for the State of Alaska. During my construction time, I attended night classes and earned my Associates Degree in Fire Science, and eventually completed my Bachelors Degree in Occupational Safety.

I tested for the Anchorage Fire Department 4 times before landing my dream job. I love helping the citizens of my hometown. I enjoy working as a Firefighter and EMS professional; however, the mental and physical aspects of this career are quite taxing on a person in their late sixties - which is the age I will be before being able to retire. I am not eligible for Social Security benefits, therefore my plan is to leave the Anchorage Fire Department after 30 years of service, and go back to construction and earn enough credits for Social Security benefits in order to obtain some sort of financial stability. My second retirement option is to seek employment with another fire department, which offer a lateral hire, and defined benefit plan. The second choice will give me a definite retirement age and a financial plan I can count on. Currently, the aforesaid option is what I, and many others in public safety, are currently looking into.

House Bill No. 79 is the solution that the public safety community needs. Recruitment and retention for public safety positions is at an all-time low. A significant loss of qualified employees cost departments approximately \$190,000 per member; I believe HB79 can reverse this trend.

Please consider what improvements House Bill No. 79 offers. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Dustin Huf