

From: John Wagner <johnwwagner@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 1, 2019 2:10 PM
To: Rep. Chuck Kopp <Rep.Chuck.Kopp@akleg.gov>
Subject: Please support HB79

Dear Rep. Kopp,

Thank You for championing this bill and being an advocate for Alaska's Tier IV public safety professionals. I sent this same letter to you weeks ago and am now extending my concerns to your colleagues in the House Finance Committee. Thank you again for your support.

I write this letter urging you to support HB79, a proposed retirement plan aimed at keeping our talented first-responders in Alaska. A defined benefit plan will go a long way to make Alaska an attractive place to live and work, and will hopefully stem the mass exodus of Tier IV workers who are moving south for a more dependable retirement.

I am a Tier IV Alaska firefighter who lives and works in the city of Fairbanks. Many of my friends and former coworkers have made the difficult decision to leave Alaska permanently for jobs that offer a brighter, more sustainable future. At my fire department in particular, the average tenure of new Tier IV employees hired after 2006 is less than two years. This costs the state and municipalities more money in the long run. New firefighters are outfitted with turnout clothing and equipment, are trained and certified on the tax-payers' dime, and, on average, turn around and leave the state in less than two years.

I was born and raised in Juneau at Bartlett Regional Hospital and have lived in this great state ever since. I have lived in Fairbanks since 2003 when I moved up for college, earning my Bachelors degree from UAF. I have worked at the Fairbanks Fire Department since 2012 and my wife and I are expecting our first child in just five weeks. I mention these life milestones to emphasize how deeply-rooted I am in Alaska. I would not be who I am today if not for the services and support of this great state and, conversely, Alaska would not be what it is today if not for hard-working people like me.

I humbly ask you to support HB79 for a brighter future for all Tier IV Alaska public safety professionals.

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