

**From:** Cacy Wilfer [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, April 9, 2021 2:58 PM  
**To:** Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>; Adam.Wool@akleg.gov  
**Cc:** Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>; CWilfer@fairbanks.us  
**Subject:** Support of HB55

Senator Bishop and Representative Wool

As a born and raised Alaskan, and a member of your district, I want to thank you both for your support of HB55 on firefighter and police officer benefits this legislative session and your support of previous HB79 in the past. I appreciate your efforts to help return benefits for state firefighters and police back to a defined benefit system that will assist in keeping talented personnel in-state.

Our staffing levels at both the Fairbanks Fire Department and the Fairbanks Police Department are consistently suffering from attrition of entry to mid-level workers (many Alaskans among them) who leave the state for communities in the lower 48 for defined benefit retirement programs to help ensure them and their families' futures.

The cost of this is inadequate staffing that damages service delivery, a lack of experience within the agencies that makes it difficult to train or retain excited new recruits, and a negative perception of Public Safety that hurts employee morale. State employees in other lines of work can remain in their careers for longer periods, building on their retirement pools, without suffering the same physical toll taken on by workers in public safety,

HB55 is built upon a realistic 7% rate of return and offers an affordable compromise on benefits that would allow public safety in Alaska to thrive and reduce staffing losses of talented individuals to agencies outside Alaska.

Returning to a defined benefit retirement system will offer tremendous assistance in keeping talented individuals in police, EMS, and fire in Fairbanks and serving our communities.

Thank you both very much for your time,

Cacy Wilfer

Fairbanks Fire Department

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**From:** Andrew P. Fowler [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, April 9, 2021 7:15 PM  
**To:** Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>; adam.wool@akleg.gov  
**Cc:** Cacy Wilfer [REDACTED] Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Please support HB 55

Hi there, my name is Andrew Fowler. I work at the Fairbanks Fire Department. I am writing today to urge you to support HB55. I have worked at the department for 16 years and am lucky enough to have the title of "the last employee hired at FFD under pers tier 3". Honestly, I didn't put much thought into retirement when I got this job. With the "new guys", it's certainly one of the most talked about topics. When its talked about amongst them, the conversation is usually along the lines of, "Heres the list of places that Im applying to that have much better retirement options." Its not just talk either, this is what has been happening at the Fairbanks Fire Department since the introduction of tier 4. Young people get hired here, many of them just finishing school, and they work here until they can get a job somewhere else with better benefits. Most recently, we had to conduct a special hiring (outside of our normal 2 year application cycle) because we had hired all the people on our previous list and we had become seriously short on paramedics. All this hiring isn't because we are growing our department. Its because so many people have quit to go work different jobs. I have observed the profound effects tier 4 has had on the small department that I work at. I would imagine its happening all over. Please support house bill 55 and help make Alaska a place that people want to work and can see a future in.

Thanks,  
Andrew Fowler

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**From:** Myles Jellison [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, April 9, 2021 8:30 PM  
**To:** Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Support of HB55

Senator Bishop,

I am writing to ask that you will continue to support HB 55, Peace Officer and Firefighter Retirement benefits.

I am currently employed at the City of Fairbanks as a Driver with the Fire Department. I enjoy my job and the opportunity to serve my community. Unfortunately, the current retirement system, that was put in place in 2006, has changed the nature of the Fire Department and the level of service we provide. With Tier IV our employee retention is terrible and we are constantly losing highly trained and skilled firefighters to out of state jobs. Half of the department is under 3 years on the job. In contrast many Tier II/III firefighters retire with 20-25 years. This change has decreased the pool of area knowledge and operation experience that makes for efficient, effective, and safe firefighting. A 7 year employee on my shift just left for Bellingham, Washington and a 5 year employee is currently testing with Tacoma, Washington. They were both climbing the promotion ladder and cite lack of a defined benefit retirement as their primary reason for leaving. The loss of these firefighters is also a loss of training investment made by the organizations and schools of Alaska. One moved to Alaska specifically for fire training and both were trained by Alaskan fire departments and colleges. Their departure takes the time and money invested by Alaska to other communities outside.

Implementing the HB 55 plan would change my retirement from a savings account to a pension. This would again make our benefits competitive with fire departments across the country. It has several safeguards to avoid the costs that were included in the previous defined benefit plans. This change would immediately affect employee retention and initial hiring. Many of the departments in the

interior of Alaska have a growing experience gap between retiring Tier II/III and brand new firefighters. Firefighters are trained up by Alaska entities and then leave for better benefits. As more Tier II/III retire all departments are struggling to find qualified and seasoned replacement officers. I believe that this bill would change that trend and contribute to stopping the population and resource loss that the state is seeing.

This is the single most important issue to me and your support for this bill would gain you my support.

Please contact me if you have any questions,  
Myles Jellison

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Myles Jellison  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** Tony Naber [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, April 9, 2021 9:56 PM  
**To:** Grier.Hopkins@akleg.gov; myersalaska@outlook.com  
**Cc:** Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>; cwilfer@fairbanks.us  
**Subject:** Support of HB55, A Defined Benefit Retirement System

Dear Sirs,

I am writing in support of HB 55, a defined benefit retirement system for AK police and fire department personnel. I was born and raised in Fairbanks, having been in the fire service since turning 18 in 2013. I am still young enough and early enough in my career at the Fairbanks Fire Department that the financial decisions I make now will effect the majority of my career and can really effect what happens to me after my career.

I love Fairbanks, but one thing that is very obvious to me is the number of excellent, top notch people, many of them raised in Alaska, who move out of state for better retirement benefits. Years of teamwork, training, and investments of time and money into stellar individuals flying south for better retirement systems. The difference in our systems is so stark, members with 8, 9, 12 years into their careers here in Alaska are leaving to completely restart 20-year careers, sometimes from the recruit level, because of the disparity in retirement outcomes.

I too, can feel the pull of a career elsewhere where it is objectively warmer year round, but also provides for a more secure retirement in a state with a lower cost of living than Alaska. I feel strongly that if we want to retain quality personnel here in our own state, we should provide for a retirement that will assure financial security that matches the needs of Alaskans who want to stay, work, raise their families, and finally retire in Alaska.

Thank you for your support of this measure.

Tony Naber

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10