

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Interim
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Representative Chuck Kopp

House Majority Leader · District 10 · Oceanview/Old Seward, Bayshore/Klatt

MEMORANDUM

TO: Co-Chair Carolyn Hall
Co-Chair Zack Fields
House Labor and Commerce

FROM: Representative Chuck Kopp 
House Majority Leader

DATE: February 11, 2026

RE: House Bill 210: Follow-up questions from February 2, 2026, meeting

Below are the answers that were asked by the committee in the first hearing of House Bill 210: PEACE OFFICERS / FIREFIGHTERS: DISABILITY:

- Question was asked whether HB 210 is retroactive. Yes, this bill applies to all current members who are receiving disability benefits at the time the legislation takes effect.
- Information was requested on the number of employees currently receiving occupational and non-occupational disability benefits, the duration of those benefits, and whether those members are in a defined benefit (DB) or defined contribution (DCR) plan.

As of February 5, 2026, there are 21 members receiving DB occupational disability benefits, of whom four are peace officers or firefighters. There are 48 members receiving DB non-occupational disability benefits, of whom one is a peace officer. There are 16 members receiving DCR occupational disability benefits, of whom 12 are peace officers or firefighters.

The longest-standing DB occupational disability benefit has an effective date of January 1, 2007. The longest-standing DB non-occupational disability benefit has an effective date of June 1, 2004. The longest-standing DCR occupational disability benefit has an effective date of October 1, 2012.

- Information was requested on how many public safety employees are currently in PERS.

As of February 5, 2026, there are 3,585 actively employed PERS public safety members. This includes 2,522 peace officers and 1,063 firefighters across all tiers. Specifically, Tier 1 includes 5 total public safety employees, Tier 2 includes 68, Tier 3 includes 613, and Tier 4 includes 2,899.

- Information was requested regarding the dollar amount currently held in the disability trust funds.

As of February 5, 2026, the PERS Disability Trust Fund balance is \$98,971,000. The TRS Disability Trust Fund balance is \$9,879,000. These balances support disability benefits for both DB and DCR members within each respective system.

- Information was requested regarding the average annual salary for police officers and firefighters.

As of February 5, 2026, the average monthly salary for DB peace officers is \$13,622.22, which equates to an annual salary of \$163,466.64. The average monthly salary for DCR peace officers is \$9,545.12, or \$114,541.44 annually. For firefighters, the average monthly salary for DB members is \$12,505.61, or \$150,067.32 annually, while the average monthly salary for DCR members is \$8,872.36, or \$106,468.32 annually.

- Information was requested on which job classifications are considered “public safety” under PERS, including whether correctional officers or EMS providers qualify.

According to [AS 39.35.680\(30\)](#), “peace officer” or “firefighter” means an employee occupying a position as a peace officer, chief of police, regional public safety officer, correctional officer, correctional superintendent, firefighter, fire chief, or probation officer, but does not include a village public safety officer employed by a village public safety officer program established under [AS 18.65.670](#).

Unless the position independently meets the peace officer or firefighter definition above, the following do not automatically qualify under AS 39.35.680(30): EMS providers / paramedics, Emergency dispatchers, Probation or parole officers, Security officers, and Search and rescue personnel.

- Information was requested regarding the tax treatment of public safety disability benefits.

Increasing the occupational disability benefit percentage does not change the tax treatment of the benefit. For most members, occupational disability benefits are treated as non-taxable wage-replacement benefits when calculated as a percentage of gross monthly salary for a job-related injury or illness. This treatment would continue if the percentage were increased.

- Information was requested regarding Washington State’s occupational disability benefit rates.

Washington disability benefits generally provide approximately 50% of final average salary, with adjustments based on years of service and injury classification.

Please let us know if the committee would like additional detail, fiscal modeling, or further comparisons.