

Public Safety Employees Association

Position Paper In Support of

SB 211

The Public Safety Employees Association extend our thanks to Senator Lesil McGuire for introducing SB 211. We also extend our thanks to Senators Linda Menard and Bettye Davis for co-sponsoring this important piece of legislation. The bill will allow police officers and fire fighters who purchase military time for retirement service credit the opportunity to also purchase retiree medical benefits.

A fire-fighter or police officer vested (five paid-up years of PERS service) in the Public Employees Retirement Plan is eligible to receive up to five years of PERS retirement credit for active military service. However, when an officer or fire-fighter purchases military service, he or she does not get to count the time purchased toward retiree medical benefits. Many who purchase time in this manner assume that it counts toward retiree medical benefits but at retirement they are disappointed to learn it doesn't. SB 211 will give those who purchase their military time an option to also pay for their retiree medical.

Those who purchase military time do not double-dip, because members hired under the PERS after June 30, 1986, are not eligible for PERS military credit if they are retired from regular military service and are eligible for a federal benefit for the same service. SB 211 will allow those who purchase military service time to also purchase retiree medical credit in the PERS program.

Understanding that accessing medical benefits upon completion of service as a police officer or fire fighter simply offers some peace of mind to those who earlier put their lives on the line while serving our country and are now doing the same as members of public safety.

Support for this legislation sends a message to those who serve the public in a fire and police capacity that their military time will not go unnoticed along with their current service. Please pass this legislation and give those men and women who combine military service with state service to also purchase medical coverage for retirement.

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