

April 16, 2019

Dear Representative Foster,

I want to voice my support for House Bill 79, a bill that has the potential to bring transformative and much needed change to recruitment and retention shortfalls within Alaska's Department of Corrections and other Law Enforcement agencies. Recruiting and retaining highly qualified Officers is an issue that deeply affects our community in Nome, as well as the State as a whole.

I believe that the measures included in HB79 will lead to a cost-savings to the State. We currently invest hundreds of thousands of dollars in recruitment and training, only to see our recruits leave the Department after five years. The cost associated with this bill should be viewed as money well invested to offset the wasted dollars spent on Officers leaving for other states with defined benefits pension plans. Providing a competitive retirement for Alaska's public safety members would help to turn the tide on department retention issues, would increase public safety in the long run, and start to address a pragmatic solution to a genuinely complex problem.

This bill is good for Alaska, makes Alaska competitive, and is good for all public safety employees. I hope to encourage you to move it out of Committee on Thursday. There are few issues today that bring together large, politically and culturally diverse portions of our state like public safety does. The dedicated men and women who wake up each day and put themselves on the frontline to keep Alaskans safe are the cornerstone of our long-term vision for public safety success.

Many thanks,

Adam R. Lust
PO Box 629
Nome, Alaska 99762

1-907-304-2526