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April 16, 2019  
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Representative Cathy Tilton  
State Capital Room 400  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Representative Cathy Tilton:

I am writing you in support of House Bill 79 which is the bill concerning public safety employee's retirement. I work as a detective for the Anchorage Police Department and I am currently assigned to the Crimes Against Children Unit. It is my responsibility to investigate the most heinous crimes that occur against our most vulnerable population, which is children. I have investigated cases including homicides, sexual abuse, assaults, and child pornography to name a few.

Policing is inherently dangerous not only to our physical well being but also to our mental state as well. I interview children who are victims of unspeakable acts within our communities on a daily basis, and it is heart wrenching listening to their stories and what they have survived and what they will continue to live with. I bear the burden of taking home those stories with me everyday to my own family.

My police academy began in 2011 and it started with 29 recruits. Today, not 8 years later we have 12 officers left. I can compare that to academy classes that have a defined benefit (pension) plan and their numbers are much stronger as they continue their employment through to retirement. I understand that I became a police officer under the defined contribution (401k) but through a defined benefit it can do nothing but retain employees and make our communities a safer place.

Thank you for your support of public safety employees and their families and I encourage you to stand behind this bill and continue to carry it forward.

Sincerely,

Patrick M. O'Connor