

**From:** Andrew Spohn <spohnak@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Tuesday, April 30, 2019 4:08 PM

**To:** Rep. Neal Foster <Rep.Neal.Foster@akleg.gov>; Rep. Tammie Wilson <Rep.Tammie.Wilson@akleg.gov>; Rep. Jennifer Johnston <Rep.Jennifer.Johnston@akleg.gov>; Rep. Daniel Ortiz <Rep.Daniel.Ortiz@akleg.gov>; Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>; Rep. Gary Knopp <Rep.Gary.Knopp@akleg.gov>; Rep. Bart LeBon <Rep.Bart.Lebon@akleg.gov>; Rep. Cathy Tilton <Rep.Cathy.Tilton@akleg.gov>; Rep. Kelly Merrick <Rep.Kelly.Merrick@akleg.gov>; Rep. Colleen Sullivan-Leonard <Rep.Colleen.Sullivan-Leonard@akleg.gov>; Rep. Ben Carpenter <Rep.Ben.Carpenter@akleg.gov>; Rep. Chuck Kopp <Rep.Chuck.Kopp@akleg.gov>

**Subject:** HB79

Esteemed members of the House Finance Committee,

This email is to inform you of my support of House Bill 79 (HB 79) regarding a defined benefit retirement program for Alaska's public safety employees.

As an Alaskan who was born and raised in this great state I was fortunate to be employed full time as firefighter/EMT as a young adult after receiving a degree and multiple state certifications and training through the University of Alaska Fairbanks and through training provide by local communities.

My understanding of HB 79 is that it is intended to incentivize public safety employees to remain in the state, instead of taking their certifications, education, training, and experience to other states or occupations.

Currently, I have nearly 10 years of experience working as a full time firefighter/EMT. Being full vested in my 401K program means that I am free to seek employment in other states with no negative effect on my retirement savings. I have witnessed several of my peers, who share the same Tier 4 retirement plan as I do, make the move either out of state or to another unrelated type of employment. These colleagues are taking with them the knowledge, skills, and experience that our state could benefit from.

Because firefighters and law enforcement officers are required to complete rigorous training it is quite expensive to produce fully qualified public safety employees. Much of these funds come from the state in the form of state certifications and training as well as funding provided to local municipalities and communities to provide initial and continuing education. As a state we invest funding in public safety employees but without HB 79 there is nothing keeping that investment in-state.

I appreciate your careful consideration of this bill and urge your support.

Respectfully,

Andrew Spohn

Firefighter/EMT