

From: [Emily Thompson](#)
To: [Rep. Neal Foster](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Jennifer Johnston](#); [Rep. Daniel Ortiz](#); [Rep. Andy Josephson](#); [Rep. Gary Knopp](#); [Rep. Bart LeBon](#); [Rep. Cathy Tilton](#); [Rep. Kelly Merrick](#); [Rep. Colleen Sullivan-Leonard](#); [Rep. Ben Carpenter](#); [Rep. Chuck Kopp](#)
Subject: HB79 Support Letter
Date: Thursday, May 9, 2019 10:35:33 AM

To whom it may concern:

I am writing you in support of HB79, the proposed fix to the Tier IV retirement system for Alaska's Public Safety employees. I am proud to support this bill for several reasons, most importantly because I feel that in the long run it will do a great deal to benefit our state and help keep our residents safe.

Alaska's taxpayers face a problem: their money is being wasted to train firefighters and cops who are being fully trained and certified and then leaving our state. This high turnover rate is preventing our public from reaping the benefits of experienced employees and instead forcing them to rely on inexperienced employees to keep them safe. This is not a good investment of taxpayers' money. The answer for why so many of these skilled employees are leaving is simple: the retirement in place for current public safety employees is inadequate. Alaska is not able to compete with other departments nationwide that offer a defined benefit package.

Public safety employees work hard daily and put their own lives and personal health at risk. To ask employees to work a job that takes such a physical toll on their body without the ability to retire at a reasonable age is not a logical request. After 25 years of lifting heavy objects, working hard under stress, and losing sleep, most employees will not be able to work much longer in public safety, much less take on a new career to support them in "retirement".

Everyone is suffering with Tier IV. Public safety employees are not being rewarded for their service and are stuck with inadequate retirement. Alaska's taxpayers are getting horrible return on their investment as they watch their dollars wasted to train employees who then leave. HB79 is a reasonable, conservative fix for this problem that would benefit public safety employees, and in turn give taxpayers better value for their money, which will in turn result in a safer community for all.

I thank you for your consideration, and urge you to do everything in your power to keep HB79 moving forward.

Respectfully,

Emily Thompson
Firefighter/EMT
Anchorage Fire Department
Station 1C

