

Jacob Stoddard  
1101 Cushman St.  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701  
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Representatives and Senators  
State Capital  
Juneau AK, 99801

Dear House Finance and Interior Delegation,

My name is Jacob Stoddard and I am a firefighter with the City of Fairbanks Fire Department. Today I am writing to you in support of House Bill 55, asking that you pass the bill to the senate so that action might be taken to fix the broken and shortsighted retirement system that Tier IV is and remedy the issues it has caused.

One of the most visible effects of this ineffectual retirement system is primarily seen in the high rate of turnover of young public safety employees, especially here in the City of Fairbanks where new hires are leaving under two years on average. high turnover rate has impacted the department in many ways, including the substantial loss of experienced professionals in public safety, lack of competitiveness during hiring and recruiting (especially when compared to fire departments outside the State of Alaska), as well as the high cost and amount of time required to fully train competent and qualified public safety employees each time another group of employees leave for organizations out of state with adequate retirement systems in place. All of the above has been very taxing on the Fairbanks Fire Department; we are unable to hire and retain paramedics desperately needed to staff ambulances for the community, see our friends and coworkers leave the state for work at a shocking frequency, and can not help but feel that at this point the only option going forward is to leave the state in order to be able to have any chance at getting a proper retirement down the road until Tier IV is fixed and the State of Alaska sees the need to retain its public safety employees with the incentive of a revised system.

In conclusion, I urge you and ask for your support in the passing of House Bill 55 from the committee to the senate so that it can progress through the legislative process. If the State of Alaska values the long-term safety of its communities, HB55 should be a priority in order to ensure the retaining of vital public safety employees serving the public across the state.

Respectfully,

Jacob Stoddard