

From: Beau Gehler [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 24, 2021 6:45 PM
To: Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>
Subject: HB 55

Support of House Bill 55

Dear Representative Josephson,

First and foremost, thank you for all your hard work and support in getting House Bill 55 this far!!! My name is Beau Gehler and I live in Anchorage. I've been a firefighter with the Anchorage Fire Department for 5 years.

I'm writing to you today to express my grave concern about the inadequacies of the current Tier IV retirement system that all Public Safety employees, hired since 2007, are members of. The Tier IV plan is incredibly flawed. As a result, recruitment and retainment of Public Safety Employees is down. House Bill 55 goes a long way towards fixing that.

There are many fire departments in the Northwest that regularly offer "laterals" from one department to another. And many of them are still offering a defined benefit retirement plan. Since 2007 we have started losing people to these lateral transfers at an alarming rate and it will only increase unless Tier IV is replaced with something that can offer some financial security. HB 55 is a good start towards correcting that in a practical way which is good for both the State of Alaska as well as the hard working people who serve it.

The bottom line is this. When I first tested with AFD it was not uncommon to be testing against 1000 people. These days we are lucky if we receive 500 applications and the common thing that you will hear from people is that the Tier IV retirement system is to blame.

Please continue to support House Bill 55 and encourage your colleagues on the House Finance Committee to do the same. The cost to the State of Alaska in supporting this bill will be far less than if we do nothing at all.

Sincerely,
Beau Gehler

[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

From: Trey [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 24, 2021 7:28 PM
To: Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>
Subject: HB 55

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: [REDACTED]
Date: February 24, 2021 at 7:25:44 PM AKST
Subject: Fwd: HB 55

Date: February 24, 2021 at 7:21:37 PM AKST
Subject: HB 55

Dear Representative Andy Josephson,

I would like to discuss a growing concern for public safety within the State of Alaska. As you know, nearly half of public safety workers now fall into the Tier IV retirement system. My concern is that this retirement system will not provide an adequate retirement for our frontline public safety workers including firefighters, police officers, and State Troopers. This concern is shared by labor and management and has real financial consequences for the State and local municipalities in the form of recruitment and retention. The cost of training a new public safety member in the state is approximately \$190,000 which, in the past, was spread out over a 25-year career. We are now seeing our well-trained public safety members leave after 5 years and the money which could be used for training and equipment is now being used to recruit and train new officers. This also leaves our public safety departments with less experience as we continue to bring in newer members. This problem has been well stated by nearly every public safety department within the State and there is no sign of this trend reversing without action from the legislature.

Over the last 12 years we have worked to find a solution that solves the recruitment and retention crisis and also protects the State from an unfunded liability. With a conservative approach that offers a modest benefit we can attract and retain the best public safety workers. I encourage you to support House Bill 55 which offers a practical solution to this growing problem and sets the State up to be competitive again. Thank you for taking the time to review this letter and for your work in Juneau.

Sincerely,

Robert Shafer
Chugiak, Ak
[REDACTED]

From: Justin Mack [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 25, 2021 10:40 AM
To: Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>
Subject: HB55 Letter of Support

Dear Representative Andy Josephson:

I would like to discuss a growing concern for public safety within the State of Alaska. As you know, over half of all public safety workers now fall into the Tier IV retirement system. My concern is that this retirement system will not provide an adequate retirement for our frontline public safety workers including firefighters, police officers, and State Troopers. This concern is shared by labor and management and has real financial consequences for the State and local municipalities in the form of recruitment and retention. The cost of training a new public safety member in the state is approximately \$190,000 which, in the past, was spread out over a 25-year career. We are now seeing our well-trained public safety members leave after 5 years and the money which could be used for training and equipment is now being used to recruit and train new officers. This also leaves our public safety departments with less experience as we continue to bring in newer members. This problem has been well stated by nearly every public safety department within the State and there is no sign of this trend reversing without action from the legislature.

It cannot be overstated, there is a real and growing cost to doing nothing. We will likely be unable to recapture the public safety members that have already left but we have a chance to retain those we have and become competitive once again. Over the last 14 years we have worked to find a solution that solves the recruitment and retention crisis and also protects the State from an unfunded liability. With a conservative approach that offers a modest benefit we can attract and retain the best public safety workers. I encourage you to support House Bill 55 which offers a practical solution to this growing problem and sets the State up to be competitive again. Thank you for taking the time to review this letter and for your work in Juneau.

Sincerely,

Justin Mack

Alaska Professional Firefighters Association Vice President

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: john standridge [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 25, 2021 12:01 PM
To: Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>
Subject: Letter of support HB55

Representatives,

I want to start out by thanking you for all of your time and efforts up to this point in regards to HB55.

My name is Johnathan Standridge I'm 35 I am married and I have two young kids, My wife was born and raised in Alaska, and we hope to raise our children here so that they can enjoy all the beauty and excitement that Alaska has to offer.

I have worked in the fire service for 15 years, 10 of which had been on the North slope and 5 with the Anchorage fire department. My choice to join the fire service started when I was a child and I've spent my entire life working towards that goal. With many departments to choose from across the country, the Anchorage fire department has always been my first choice. In my time as a working adult here in Alaska, I have held other jobs, but none as satisfying as the life of a firefighter. Unfortunately, non have been quite as physically taxing as the life of a firefighter either. This is including my time working as a scaffold builder on the North Slope at temperatures reaching 40 below zero. In conveying this sentiment, I hope to illustrate the importance of having a system that supports the members of this fine state, at the time of their retirement. These men and women who make the choice to put personal health and longevity aside for the love of the job and their fellow Alaskans, should have some peace of mind going into retirement. It is a hard truth that many of us will endure some form of long term adverse health effects from performing our duties through the course of our career. As a young man choosing to make this my career path, the idea of long term effects was something I considered, but through the eyes of youth and enthusiasm it seemed like a farfetched consequence. As I consider the future now that I have children, this weighs more on my mind, and is accompanied by a heavier sense of reality. I feel that despite my best efforts to maintain my physical and mental health over the entirety of my service, achieving a career of 20 years will be a great challenge, and with being a participant of the tier IV system retiring at 20 years is just as unlikely as concluding my time in the fire service without a significant illness or injury.

Unfortunately the Tier IV retirement system has already pushed many Alaskans out of their homes in search of a retirement system that adequately provides for their families. My wife and I hope to not be one of those families. Unfortunately the reality is that despite our love for Alaska we have to be realistic, and consider the fact that there is comparable pay with a pension in many other states. Though Alaska is and always will be our home, the truth remains that a fire department system with a pension in place would better provide for Alaskan families after 20 years of service then the benefits afforded to Tier IV members. A tier IV reform would also greatly contribute to the future retention of a trained and experienced workforce.

Please I urge you to strongly considerer the benefits of HB55, If not for our families, then considerer the tremendous financial burden that the state of Alaska will continue to endure as men and women use Alaska to get the expensive training required for their careers just to later relocate into a pensions system elsewhere.

Thank you for reading this email and considering these changes for the future of Alaska.

Johnathan Standridge,
[REDACTED]

From: Charles Potter [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 26, 2021 9:31 AM
To: Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>
Subject: House Bill 55

February 26, 2021

Representative Andy Josephson

State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska

Dear Representative Andy Josephson,

My name is Charles Potter and I am a life long Alaskan, born and raised in Anchorage. In 2011, I joined the Anchorage Fire Department to support our community as a firefighter. As a current Tier IV member, I'm writing you today in support of House Bill (HB) 55 and why I feel that it's important to take action on this issue and continue moving it through the legislative process.

Nearly half of our State's public safety employees fall under the current Tier IV retirement system. This system does not provide an adequate or competitive retirement for our State's firefighters, police officers and Troopers which has resulted in lowered recruitment, lowered retention of trained and experienced employees, and subsequently, challenges with adequate staffing throughout all of our public safety sectors.

The current retirement system and subsequent low retention is also financially burdensome. The cost of training a new public safety employee is approximately \$190,000, spread out over that individual's 25 year career. Current trends show that newer Tier IV employees are leaving the state after an average of 5 years of service in search of a more competitive retirement system. With each loss, Alaska loses its trained employees to other states and must start over with a new recruitment.

This cyclical epidemic that has begun to plague the public safety sector will only continue if something isn't done to address the need for a change to a defined benefit system. HB 55 is a practical solution to this growing problem and I encourage your support on this issue. Thank you for taking the time to review this letter and for your hard work in Juneau.

Sincerely,
Charles Potter
Constituent District 12
[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 1, 2021 12:09 PM
To: Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Support HB55

Dear Representative Josephson,

My name is Nick Glorioso and I am a Firefighter for the Anchorage Fire Department. I hired on here in 2000 and am lucky to have a defined benefit to look forward to in my retirement. Unfortunately so many of my coworkers are not so lucky. They do not have a defined benefit of any kind including social security or SBS. In fact they are some of the very few employees that are covered under PERS that do not have the protection

that a defined benefit, social security or SBS provide. Public Safety is constantly touted as a primary focus of the Alaskan lawmakers however the public safety officers in Alaska have been left out in the cold. I appreciate the work that has pushed HB55 this far it is so important to finish the job and get this fixed.

My brother Robert Glorioso is a Firefighter/Paramedic in Bellingham, Washington. He Left the Anchorage Fire Department seeking a defined benefit retirement and he found it. Tristan Raber, Ed Johnson, Cody Carver, Hunter Bomar, Richard Bradley, Cody Smith, Ryan Groenewig and Justin Millette are just a few of my coworkers that have been fully trained as firefighters here at the Anchorage Fire Department and have left specifically because the state retirement system leaves them with no security in retirement. I realize that there is a cost to this fix however the cost to doing nothing far outweighs the cost of fixing the system. Recruitment and retention is a real problem for all public safety officers all over Alaska and the new model of getting hired here, getting trained and certified here, and them leaving here to places with a DB retirement system has become the norm. The cost of putting hundreds of thousands of dollars into a single employee just to have them leave is bad business.

Please continue to support HB55 and push it thorough to the finish line.

Nick Glorioso

[REDACTED]

From: Michael Wolcott [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 2, 2021 6:26 PM
To: Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>
Subject: HB 55

I am writing to please ask for your support for house bill 55 and I ask you to please take action on this bill now.

Thank you for your time and service.

Respectfully,
Michael Wolcott

From: David Barbeau [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 3, 2021 8:09 PM
To: Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>
Subject: House Bill 55 (HB 55)

Hello,

My name is David Barbeau and I have had the pleasure of serving the citizens of Anchorage for 13 years with the Anchorage Fire Department. I originally moved up from California to apply for this job

in 2007, right around the time we changed from Tier 3 to Tier 4. I am writing you to urge you to please continue to move **House Bill 55 (HB 55)** through the legislative process for **two** simple reasons:

First, people who work in public safety with Tier 4 retirement have and will continue to use this job as a resume builder and stepping stone. They take their knowledge and skills to work with cities that offer better retirements. I have seen literally ZERO employees with Tier 3 leave AFD prior to retirement, and I have seen SEVERAL employees with Tier 4 leave to work in fields with better retirements, **Hunter Bomar, Bart Grabman, Aaron Gorham, Cody Carver, Tristan Raber, Richard Bradley, Ed Johnson, and Cody Smith** are a few of my close friends and coworkers that I have had to see leave because of this very reason.

Second, and more to the point, I stand to directly benefit from it. I don't see that as a bad thing because it means my family and I are better off. It means I am more likely to stay working with AFD to the end of my fruitful career and live out my life here in Alaska and reinvest what I have earned in to Alaska's economy, maybe even start a business of my own where I can offer a strong retirement to my employees as well.

Please, help us stop the employee hemorrhage and support your firefighters and working class. Please continue to support HB 79.

David Barbeau: Firefighter, Engineer, Hazardous Materials Technician
Anchorage Fire Station 1
122 E 4th Ave.
Anchorage AK, 99501