

Representative Andy Josephson:

My name Chris Pavadore and I am writing in support of House Bill 55. I moved to Alaska in 2006 for school and, like many transplants from everywhere else, fell in love with the state and what it offers for self-development and familial prosperity. It is by no accident that I have found myself in a position where leaving the state is a bittersweet yet ongoing consideration. I have met a wife who teaches 2nd grade in Anchorage and became a new father only a few years ago hoping to raise kids in a way that was unfathomable for my own upbringing and realistically unique to the last frontier. Yet a crisis in what comes after the chaos of this career choice exists in a lack of known safety for my family that keeps my eyes open and ear to the ground.

My career has had significant change as I became a member of the Anchorage Fire Department just 15 months ago. My interest in pursuing fire was not necessarily traditional as a 33-year-old probationary employee but is a profound decision in my life. Prior to the service, I was successful in climbing the ladder at a local university, making sufficient money to provide for my family while continuing my own education. But I was lacking an important aspect of life necessary for my happiness which is the ability to provide time to my family. My *why* is very much a function of time available with my family, not money. To be able to spend time with my kids and wife is second to none in my list of priorities. Making money is a necessity, sure, but not what motivates my passion. However, I knew in making the career change I required the ability to continue working in a manner that benefits my community. My kids' well-being, growth, education, and happiness will be directly related to the strength of the community in which I live and play. My work can have a profound impact to promote health in the community as a member of AFD.

The Anchorage Fire Department has afforded me the opportunity to check almost all the boxes required for my growth and safety net to provide for my family. I write to you today to reflect on the time component as we all cannot work forever. There are stories too emotional to share in this letter that I continue to process as a direct component of the job that many believe we sign up for and should expect. Though it may be an aspect of the job, it is *not* what we signed up to do. The sights we endure on any given shift can be replayed over and over, making us wonder "what if this happened differently on scene ...would the outcome have changed or been better?" When you sit at home and your wife or kids ask you, "Dad, why are you so quiet?" and you don't have the words to articulate that you couldn't save that 6-month old in a cardiac arrest while you stare into the eyes of your own young children or couldn't help that kid who witnessed his parent collapse... it is easy to see how quickly one can think "is this really what I signed up for?" When we go to fire scenes and interact with and manipulate items known to be long-term health hazards for the safety and benefit of the owners and occupants, are we truly cared for in the manner our families need us to be?

The writing is on the wall. The Tier IV system is not set up for excellence in this line of work. Many employees will walk through the doors of public safety in the Municipality of Anchorage and State of Alaska. Many will be young and in a position to reap the benefits of the world-class training offered to them and will then take that training and their families to a place that will protect the last chapter of life in retirement, disability and death. They will learn and grow in Alaska only to leave, with millions invested in time and money, bringing a wealth of knowledge that should have remained with us.

Respectfully, I recognize the length of this plea for consideration but feel strongly this issue needn't be tabled or overlooked. Do not allow our state to lose the folks that build a strong foundation for the new

guy. Though I do not have the time on that others may have, I have the aptitude to observe and extrapolate the integrity of the careers others have had around me. When I overhear the many mentors discussing options they've found and are pursuing in the Pacific Northwest or elsewhere in the lower 48, I can feel my own morale diminish.

To state a need for strong consideration of HB55 exists is an understatement. Our community benefits when our personnel are trained and experienced. A revolving door of the highly experienced due to a lack of benefits is not something that should be tolerated. My mentors in this department would be sorely missed if they were not there to provide the guidance I have had to future firefighters. The fire service thrives on growth from the experiences of those who come before us; if that pool dwindles, so too does our ability to respond in a manner the community has grown to expect and appreciate.

If there are any questions or concerns regarding this letter, please reach out to me for discussion. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kindest regards,
Chris Pavadore
11406 Lower Sunny Circle
Eagle River, AK 99577
907-903-4111