

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 12, 2021 11:09 AM
To: Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>
Subject: HB 55

To whom it may concern,
I am contacting the committee to let you all know I am in support of HB55. I want to encourage you to take action on this bill now. I believe it is in the best interest of the state to do so. People so often look at the costs/ cost increase of a bill like this and immediately reject it, but I believe HB55 will actually save the state money in the long run. The enormous costs of training folks that leave in less than a year or two, in search of better retirement, is exponentially increasing. When tier 4 began the long term effects were not fully appreciated. Now a dozen+ years later we are getting a better view of the full picture, and it's not good. Highly qualified folks turning down offers of employment where several of their own family members work and accepting employment in Washington state due to defined pension.

Thanks for taking action now
Steve Walters

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 12, 2021 1:48 PM
To: Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>
Cc: Sen. Lora Reinbold <Sen.Lora.Reinbold@akleg.gov>; Rep. Ken McCarty <Rep.Ken.McCarty@akleg.gov>
Subject: HB 55

Representative Josephson,

My name is Shayne Wescott and I am writing to you today about HB 55 and its importance to me, my fellow public service members and their future in Alaska. I have lived in Alaska for 29 years and have chosen to make this place my home for many of the obvious reasons people choose to do so. For the last 10 years I have chosen a career in the fire service, starting first with the UAF system in Fairbanks, for by working for the city of fairbanks and now with the Anchorage Fire Department. This is the best job and I can not even begin to explain how much it means to me and to be able to give back to the community that helped raise me. That all being said the Tier IV retirement system is putting this all at risk.

For many years now public servants have been going to Juneau and attempting to explain why tier IV is not sustainable as a retirement for public service employees. The numbers have shown that as a Tier IV member I have less that a 6% chance of being able to retire with 75% of my income. For myself and many others that is just not sustainable. For over a decade now we have seen public servants come to Alaska for great training opportunities and experience to only up and leave once they are vested to states with a DB plan. The state of Alaska is hemorrhaging good employees that love this state all because they don't feel that they can successfully retire and take care of a family here. Not only are the

departments suffering from high turnover but the people who pay good money in taxes are suffering because they are not getting the best trained personnel to help them when needed.

Some representatives have stated that Tier IV is a cheaper plan than a DB plan but that is not true. What is not accounted for in the Tier IV plan is the cost of training and high turnover that each department goes through. For a reference you can look at the Alaska State Troopers study that showed they spent roughly \$190,000 to recruit and train personnel. When they are losing a significant amount of their workforce that adds up to millions of dollars. This is very similar for many other departments across the state. What is also not added into the Tier IV retirement cost is that amount of money spent on workers comp claims because public service members are forced to work into their later years.

Other states have already gone through this trend and recognized that the cost of a DB plan is much cheaper and better for the people than staying a DC plan. Both Utah and West Virginia had made the switch back to a DB plan after being in a DC plan. In the Utah study they cited recruitment and retention as one of their big reasons for switching back to a DB plan.

I want to say thank you for your time in reading this email. I know as a state representative you have a lot on your plate and you taking the time to engage in this major retirement issue means a lot.

Sincerely

Shayne Wescott
[REDACTED]

From: Joey Crabb [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 12, 2021 3:52 PM
To: Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>
Subject: HB55

Dear Rep. Josephson,

I wanted to write you in regards to the support of HB55. I was born and raised in Anchorage and am a member of the Fire Department. In the time I have been with AFD I have made some very close relationships. The employees of the Anchorage Fire Department I have worked with are top notch, hardworking, great people. I love Alaska and I don't intend to go elsewhere. But I can't say the same for my co-workers. Although many of them love it here in Alaska as well, it's only natural to look out for their future and seek out options that would benefit them to have a stable retirement. Selfishly I want to keep capable well trained Fire Fighters to work with everyday so we have the best chance of helping the community and also keep ourselves out of harms way. The more our Department becomes a stepping stone for other options the less that will be the case. For the city it would be a major detriment to see these individuals pursue other paths both for the talent they bring in protecting the city, but also the money it costs (approximately \$200,000) to train each one that will go out the window. Only to have to turn around and train a new employee for another 200,000 who may choose to make the same move out of the state down the road.

I hope we are able to reach a solution for the retention crisis our public safety departments are facing. I appreciate your time and effort pushing this agenda forward and taking the time to review my letter.

FF Joey Crabb

AFD

From: O'Connell, Drew D. [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 12, 2021 3:54 PM
To: Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>
Subject: HB55

Representative Josephson,

I am writing to you in support of House Bill 55. I have been a fireman at AFD for 7 years and in my time here I have seen several of my coworkers leave for jobs at departments out of state with a defined benefit. In addition to losing skilled workers to other departments I have seen the recruiting process dwindle as the allure of being a fireman in Anchorage has faded with the loss of a pension. We are no longer able to keep the caliber of worker this city demands and deserves instead we are spending money to train fireman only to see them leave for greener pastures. I myself have been faced with difficult choices of whether it is feasible for me to finish my career at AFD. I hope that together we can instill a bright future for public safety in the State of Alaska.

Sincerely,
Drew O'Connell
AFD Station 1

From: Jason Jeffers [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 12, 2021 6:54 PM
To: Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>
Subject: HB 55 support

Representatives Josephson,

First, I want to say thank you for the many, many hours that you invest in Alaska. I have lived in Alaska for 35 years, and I love this state! Thank you for your effort to make Alaska even better.

I am writing to ask you to support HB 55. I am a fire fighter with the Anchorage Fire Department where I have worked for the past 13 years. It has been a privilege and an honor to have a job that allows me to help other people for a living. I was never a kid who dreamed of one day being a firefighter, but I am very grateful that I have had the opportunity to work as a firefighter. It has been an outstanding fit for my personality and for my family.

As I continue to progress in my career with the fire department, I have had the opportunity to work with most of the newer fire fighters. Each of them is very excited to be a fire fighter. However, since I have been with the fire department, there has been an ever increasing number of fire fighters that are beginning to look outside of Alaska for other opportunities to work as a firefighter. The trend has increased so significantly that I would say the majority of the newly hired firefighters with the Anchorage Fire Department entertain the idea of moving to another department. In almost every one of these cases, a better retirement program is a major (if not THE major) reason they are looking for employment outside the state of Alaska.

Already, we have seen several of our most promising employees take positions in other departments. The Anchorage Fire Department prides itself on providing excellent service to the public. The department is dedicated to investing time and money necessary for training to achieve that high level of service and competency. Generally, after a firefighter has been trained with the Anchorage Fire Department, they find it very easy to find another job out of state.

We need these young, promising future leaders of the fire department to stay in Alaska. If they continue to leave, the level of service and care will inevitably decline as our most promising future leaders continue to leave state.

By nature, I am a very practical and conservative person. I firmly believe that we as a state should not spend money that we do not have. I understand that there is a cost associated with changing the Tier IV retirement system. However, I believe it will be money well spent that will help Alaska to keep our most promising future leaders of the fire department in Alaska. Consequently, this will reduce the money that would otherwise need to be spent to train the replacements for the people that are leaving. It will also improve the level of service and care provided by retaining the experience of progressing fire fighters instead of losing those personnel and their experience and expertise to another state.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I urge you to support HB 55. Thank you again for your work!

Best regards,

Jason Jeffers

From: Jacob Ohms [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 12, 2021 7:45 PM
To: Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>
Subject: House bill 55

Dear Representative Andy Josephson,

My name is Jacob Ohms and I am a life long Alaskan. I was born in Anchorage and have been living in Alaska all of my life. I currently work for the Anchorage Fire Department as a Firefighter/Paramedic.

I am writing you in support of House Bill 55.

I have spent over 14 years working in emergency services. 9 and a half years in the tier 4 retirement system. I have seen countless colleagues of mine leave the state to move to a department and state that have pension plans. Every public safety department is loosing recruits and seasoned professionals because of this. In the current recruit class there is only two paramedics out of 24. This is not sustainable. Tier 5 is the solution. Tier 5 gives the state a leg up in hiring and retaining quality public Saftey employees. It's a plan with reasonable costs and low risks.

I want nothing more to stay in Alaska and raise a family. It is important to me that I'll be able to provide for them now and into the future.

Thank you for your time,

Respectfully
Jacob Ohms