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**From:** [Sen. Click Bishop](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Support for HB55  
**Date:** Sunday, May 08, 2022 12:27:31 PM

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**From:** Blayde Briske <b.briske16@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 30, 2022 10:41 PM  
**To:** Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bert Stedman <Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof <Sen.Natasha.VonImhof@akleg.gov>; Sen. David Wilson <Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bill Wielechowski <Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Support for HB55

Hello,

My name is Blayde Briske, I am an Anchorage firefighter. I am writing in support of HB55.

This legislation is critical for Public Safety in Alaska because Alaska is losing money and valuable experience with our current retirement system. I have been with AFD for a short couple years but have already experienced the loss of fellow coworkers to other departments in the lower 48 like Seattle, Idaho, and Colorado. I talked to these coworkers/friends and they said a big reason they left was a defined retirement pension to support them after their careers. Just 6 months ago we lost one of our Probationary FFs to Seattle Fire which is another 100K down the drain and Alaska behind in funding once again. I truly do believe that HB55 will help with employee retention within the Public Safety force in Alaska. The thought of leaving is always in the back of my mind to secure a retirement pension but HB55 will allow me to stay in Alaska with my family and finish off a career at AFD for another 25 years.

Our current retirement plan (Tier 4) sets our public safety employees up for failure in retirement. Currently we only receive a 5% match in our 401(A) account which is less than a social security contribution would be anywhere in the private sector. The state counts our 401(A) as a pension program, which it is not. It is another investment strategy that does not set us up for success. By identifying our 401(A) account as a pension it prevents us from collecting social security down the line. HB55 will allow us to bridge this gap.

Hopefully these points show you the importance in showing support for HB55 and help it pass in the upcoming process.

Thanks so much!

Blayde Briske  
FF/EMT FF

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**From:** [Sen. Click Bishop](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Commlltee](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Support for HB55  
**Date:** Sunday, May 08, 2022 12:27:27 PM

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**From:** Greg Wahlman <gwahlman@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 30, 2022 8:46 PM  
**To:** Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bert Stedman <Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof <Sen.Natasha.VonImhof@akleg.gov>; Sen. David Wilson <Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bill Wielechowski <Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Support for HB55

Greetings Senators,

My name is Greg Wahlman and I've had the honor and privilege to serve my community of Anchorage as a proud member of the Anchorage Fire Department since 2007. I am writing you to ask for your support of HB55.

To date, 25% of my hire group of 32 have made the decision to end their employment with AFD. I sincerely believe that if we had a defined benefit retirement system many of them would not have terminated their employment. Thankfully we now have a legitimate bill in HB55 that would return us to a defined benefit retirement system where we can avoid future employees who receive thousands of hours and dollars of training from walking out the door to a state with a defined benefit retirement.

Thank you for your time, attention and support!

Kind Regards,  
Greg Wahlman  
Engineer 1C  
Anchorage Fire Department

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**From:** [Sen. Click Bishop](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Support for HB 55  
**Date:** Sunday, May 08, 2022 12:27:22 PM

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**From:** grant kopplin <kopplin12@live.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 30, 2022 8:18 PM  
**To:** Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bert Stedman <Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof <Sen.Natasha.VonImhof@akleg.gov>; Sen. David Wilson <Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bill Wielechowski <Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Support for HB 55

My name is Grant Kopplin and I am writing in support of HB 55. I work for the Anchorage Fire Department and have been watching HB 55 very closely and ask that you please show support for this bill and keep it moving forward.

I have actively been seeking employment opportunities outside of Alaska due to our lack of a defined benefit retirement. I want to stay in Alaska and raise my family here, but there is no denying that our retirement system for first responders is inadequate and other states offer a much more secure retirement for first responders. I have to think of my family and our future and what will be best for us long term, and unfortunately the tier 4 retirement system we are currently in will not provide us a secure and stable retirement. HB 55 is a solution to this problem that my family and so many others face. It's a well-thought out and crafted plan modeled after the most successful plans in the country. Not to mention it has safeguard mechanisms in place to prevent unfunded liability from occurring.

Thank you for your time and help and please help keep HB 55 moving forward. This will not only help the first responders that call Alaska home, but will help all of Alaskans stay safe by keeping our well trained and qualified responders home in Alaska.

-Grant Kopplin

-Grant Kopplin

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**From:** [Sen. Click Bishop](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Support for HB55  
**Date:** Sunday, May 08, 2022 12:27:18 PM

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**From:** gavin strahan <gavin.t.strahan@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 30, 2022 7:57 PM  
**To:** Sen. Bill Wielechowski <Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov>; Sen. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>; Sen. David Wilson <Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof <Sen.Natasha.VonImhof@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bert Stedman <Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Support for HB55

My name is Gavin Strahan, I am an Anchorage Firefighter. I am writing in support of HB55. This legislation is critical for Public Safety in Alaska because of its ability to attract future applicants from applying to other departments and from current employees from leaving to find a department with a defined benefits plan. Alaska can no longer compete with lower 48 when trying to recruit public safety employees. These are some of our bravest and selfless people we have in our community who put everything on the line to protect and serve their communities. Alaska should compensate these people accordingly.

Please consider passing HB55

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**From:** [Sen. Click Bishop](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Support for HB 55  
**Date:** Sunday, May 08, 2022 12:27:14 PM

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**From:** Andrew Spohn <spohnak@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 30, 2022 7:56 PM  
**To:** Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bert Stedman <Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof <Sen.Natasha.VonImhof@akleg.gov>; Sen. David Wilson <Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bill Wielechowski <Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Support for HB 55

Esteemed members of the Senate Finance Committee,

This email is to inform you of my support of House Bill 55 (HB 55) regarding a defined benefit retirement program for Alaska's public safety employees.

As an Alaskan who was born and raised in this great state I was fortunate to be employed full time as firefighter/EMT as a young adult after receiving a degree and multiple state certifications and training through the University of Alaska Fairbanks and through training provided by local communities.

My understanding of HB 55 is that it is intended to incentivize public safety employees to remain in the state, instead of taking their certifications, education, training, and experience to other states or occupations.

Currently, I have over 10 years of experience working as a full time firefighter/EMT. Being fully vested in my 401K program means that I am free to seek employment in other states with no negative effect on my retirement savings. I have witnessed several of my peers, who share the same Tier 4 retirement plan as I do, make the move either out of state or to another unrelated type of employment.

These colleagues are taking with them the knowledge, skills, and experience that our state could benefit from.

Because firefighters and law enforcement officers are required to complete rigorous training it is quite expensive to produce fully qualified public safety employees. Much of these funds come from the state in the form of state certifications and training as well as funding provided to local municipalities and communities to provide initial and continuing education. As a state we invest funding in public safety employees but without HB 55 there is nothing keeping that investment in-state.

I appreciate your careful consideration of this bill and urge your support.

Respectfully,

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Andrew Spohn  
Firefighter/EMT

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**From:** [Sen. Click Bishop](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** FW: HB 55 Support  
**Date:** Sunday, May 08, 2022 12:27:10 PM

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**From:** Frederick and Kelly Kilheffer <thekilheffers@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 30, 2022 7:54 PM  
**To:** Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bert Stedman <Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof <Sen.Natasha.VonImhof@akleg.gov>; Sen. David Wilson <Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bill Wielechowski <Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** HB 55 Support

My name is James Kilheffer, I am an Anchorage Firefighter. I would like to express my support for HB55 and encourage you to support it also. This legislation is timely and very important for public safety in our great State.

The tier 4 retirement system is a poorly thought out solution for retirement for public safety employees. We will not receive social security benefits in retirement because of existing law. The tier 4 system will lead to financial insecurities in retirement because the physical demands of a career in public safety rarely allow for career lengths that are required for defined contribution type retirement systems. HB 55 is a reasonable solution to this difficult situation and will lead to improved outcomes for ALL parties involved.

PLEASE SUPPORT HB 55 OUR GREAT STATE WILL THANK YOU

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**From:** [Sen. Click Bishop](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Support for HB55  
**Date:** Sunday, May 08, 2022 12:27:06 PM

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**From:** Skyler Gallien <skylerg1798@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 30, 2022 7:41 PM  
**To:** Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bert Stedman <Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof <Sen.Natasha.VonImhof@akleg.gov>; Sen. David Wilson <Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bill Wielechowski <Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Support for HB55

My name is Skyler Gallien, I am an Anchorage firefighter. I am writing in support of HB55. This legislation is critical for Public Safety in Alaska. We are becoming a training ground for other states that are hiring our experienced public safety employees after they become vested after just five years. Many of the people I was hired with in the past ten years have left and more are considering it a viable option. People are leaving for states with a defined benefit system, many of the public safety employees also don't pay into social security so they are shopping around in the current job market and are finding better options. I don't need to tell you what these highly trained professionals' cost to train and equip, I think that the cost of the plan laid out in HB55 is significantly less than the continued cost of doing nothing. Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and I again strongly support HB 55 and ask you to do the same.

Respectfully,  
Skyler Gallien  
1125 East Donna Circle  
Wasilla AK 9965  
9073221566



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**From:** [Sen. Click Bishop](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Support HB55  
**Date:** Sunday, May 08, 2022 12:27:02 PM

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**From:** Ben Booher <booherpa18@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 30, 2022 7:07 PM  
**To:** Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bert Stedman <Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof <Sen.Natasha.VonImhof@akleg.gov>; Sen. David Wilson <Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bill Wielechowski <Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Support HB55

My name is Ben Booher and I am a firefighter in Anchorage. I am fortunate to have worked at AFD since 2001 and therefore will have a pension when I retire. Please consider supporting HB55 as it will drastically help with retention of our newer firefighters. The time and money we spend on training a new recruit is all too often lost when they move on to another department .  
Thank you,  
Ben Booher

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**From:** [Sen. Click Bishop](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** FW: HB 55  
**Date:** Sunday, May 08, 2022 12:26:57 PM

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**From:** Justin Cramer <cramer907@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 30, 2022 6:48 PM  
**To:** Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bert Stedman <Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof <Sen.Natasha.VonImhof@akleg.gov>; Sen. David Wilson <Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bill Wielechowski <Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** HB 55

Senate Finance Committee,  
My name is Justin Cramer and I am an Eagle River resident writing in support of HB55. I am also a PERS Tier 3 Anchorage Firefighter and work alongside mostly Tier 4 members. Studies that have been done proving tier 4 public safety members will be struggling at retirement age. These public safety members have a high likelihood of running out of funds during retirement. I have seen first hand the problems Tier 4 has caused in just our department. All Anchorage Firefighters do not have a social security benefit or SBS and Tier 4 members will be forced to work well past an age where they have the physical abilities to perform public safety work. HB55 is a well throughout fiscally responsible bill that provides a better retirement plan while also addressing the States needs. Please vote to move HB55.

Thank you for your time and consideration,  
Justin Cramer  
12302 Winter Park Place  
Eagle River AK, 99577

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**From:** [Sen. Click Bishop](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** FW: SUPPORT FOR HB55  
**Date:** Sunday, May 08, 2022 12:26:54 PM

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**From:** Chris Kiewik <ckiewik@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 30, 2022 6:45 PM  
**To:** Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bert Stedman <Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof <Sen.Natasha.VonImhof@akleg.gov>; Sen. David Wilson <Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bill Wielechowski <Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** SUPPORT FOR HB55

Senators,

My name is Chris Kiewik and I am a firefighter with the Anchorage Fire Department. I was born and raised in Alaska and have lived here for 45 years as a resident of South Anchorage. I am writing to you to express my support, and to ask for yours for HB55. Passing this legislation is crucial for the continued level of quality we have known in Alaska's first responders. My younger brother is also a firefighter in Anchorage with less time on the job than me. That means he is under the disastrous Tier 4 system. What that means is that he (along with many other firefighters hired in the last 10+ years) is at a point where he is seriously considering moving his family to another state. The reason for that is there is no future for him and his family under the state's current retirement system. Compared to almost the entire rest of the nation Alaska currently treats its first responders nearly the worst in terms of retirement. Firefighters here are not eligible for social security or SBS. Is a 5% match on a 401(A) really how the State of Alaska shows its appreciation to men and women that risk their lives and health to help others? We can do better and we should.

For many years now the Alaska Professional Firefighters Association along with many other labor organizations have worked hard to bring forth legislation that is not only beneficial to state employees, but financially responsible to the state. At the end of the day we are all citizens of Alaska who want to stay here with our families. It's not in our best interest to push legislation that isn't in line with the financial stability of the state. HB55 costs 12% of payroll, which when unfunded liability is paid off costs 10% less than Tier 4 (22%). In terms of comparables, 12% is in line with public safety retirements across the nation. If we don't fix our retirement system we will see continued increase of our high quality employees leave to go to a state that values their time and sacrifice. But if we fix it with HB55 even the state's own actuary has assumed an increase in retention of current employees.

The last thing I will say is that I have personally worked as a Firefighter for over 20 years in Anchorage. In that time I have heard EVERY SINGLE PERSON running for public office make statements about how they "support" public safety employees. Well this is the time to prove. Give Tier 4 and future employees a dignified retirement that recognizes their value and worth.

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Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,  
Chris Kiewik

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**From:** [Sen. Click Bishop](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Support for HB55  
**Date:** Sunday, May 08, 2022 12:26:48 PM

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**From:** Jaime Kiewik <jlkiewik@hotmail.com>

**Sent:** Saturday, April 30, 2022 6:43 PM

**To:** Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bert Stedman <Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof <Sen.Natasha.VonImhof@akleg.gov>; Sen. David Wilson <Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>

**Subject:** Support for HB55

My name is Jaime Kiewik. I am the wife of an Anchorage firefighter, and the sister in law of an Anchorage firefighter. I am writing in support of HB55. This legislation is critical for Public Safety in Alaska because the current retirement plan sets our public safety employees up for failure in retirement. Most public safety employees in AK do not receive social security, leaving them with no options for future financial stability. My brother in law is considering moving his family out of state to be able to provide a reasonable future for them. Alaska is risking losing not only quality public safety employees over this, but their families which have a Myriad of jobs across the state including nurses, teachers, business owners, and college students just to name a few.

HB 55 is a reasonable solution with a well-thought out and crafted plan modeled after the most successful plans in the country. This plan has a shared risk between the state and the employees so no one is singled out.

My husband, his brother and countless others face risk in their jobs every day, they measure it and deal with it appropriately; we ask the legislature to do the same.

Jaime Kiewik

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**From:** [Sen. Click Bishop](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Support for HB 55  
**Date:** Sunday, May 08, 2022 12:26:44 PM

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**From:** Cameron Gregg <cp.gregg23@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 30, 2022 5:56 PM  
**To:** Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>; Senator.Bert.Stedmen@akleg.gov; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>; Senator.Natasha.vonImhof@akleg.gov; Sen. David Wilson <Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bill Wielechowski <Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Support for HB 55

My name is Cameron Gregg and I am an Anchorage Firefighter. I am writing in support of HB55. This legislation is critical for Public Safety in Alaska for many reasons, one of which I have witnessed firsthand.

The state is losing money and valuable experience with our current retirement system. I have witnessed some very talented and well-trained firefighters leave the Anchorage Fire Department in pursuit of a job in the lower 48 with a defined benefit plan. This is a very real problem and can be seen across the state. Public safety employees gain valuable training and experience here and then leave the state in pursuit of a defined benefit plan. Maintaining the status quo will conservatively cost \$8-\$12 million per year in recruitment and training costs alone. There will be increased retention with HB55 and thus, lower costs in recruitment and training.

HB 55 is a very reasonable solution for Tier 4. It is understandable that there would be concern about a potential unfunded liability. I am writing to re enforce that significant thought, research, and planning has gone into this Bill. It is modeled after the most successful plans in the country and there are safeguard mechanisms in place to specifically prevent an unfunded liability from occurring. HB55 is nothing like past retirement tiers. Benefits are drastically reduced and there is no pre-medicare healthcare plan coverage.

As a firefighter, I face risk in my job every day. The risk is measured, managed, and dealt with appropriately. I am asking you all to do the same and please support HB 55.

Thank you,  
Cameron Gregg

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**From:** [Sen. Click Bishop](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** FW: HB55  
**Date:** Sunday, May 08, 2022 12:26:38 PM

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-----Original Message-----

From: [bonjour\\_alaska@yahoo.com](mailto:bonjour_alaska@yahoo.com) <[bonjour\\_alaska@yahoo.com](mailto:bonjour_alaska@yahoo.com)>  
Sent: Saturday, April 30, 2022 5:11 PM  
To: [Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>](mailto:Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov); [Sen. Bert Stedman <Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>](mailto:Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov); [Sen. Lyman Hoffman <Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>](mailto:Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov); [Sen. Natasha Von Imhof <Sen.Natasha.VonImhof@akleg.gov>](mailto:Sen.Natasha.VonImhof@akleg.gov); [Sen. David Wilson <Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov>](mailto:Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov); [Sen. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>](mailto:Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov); [Sen. Bill Wielechowski <Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov>](mailto:Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov)  
Subject: HB55

Hello,

My name is Dorena Montgomery. I live in Anchorage, Alaska. I am writing you in support of HB55, which will bring back defined benefits for first responders. This is vital for Alaska's future, as it will be instrumental in attracting and keeping people to serve and protect Alaskans.

My son is an officer with the Anchorage Police Department. He has recently been asked to work on his days off due to staffing shortages caused in part by officers leaving Anchorage and Alaska for positions in other states with defined benefits.

The people who run toward danger to help and protect their fellow Alaskans deserve defined benefits as our thanks for their service.

The cost of putting defined benefits in place will be offset in the long run because all the time and money spent on training officers will be well spent as they will be much more likely to stay, rather than taking their experience out of Alaska, and making it necessary to train even more recruits.

There is no retirement plan like Tier IV anywhere else in the country, and it puts us at a disadvantage to attract and keep people.

Thank you for making Alaskan's safety a priority, by supporting HB55.

Thank you,  
Dorena Montgomery  
7001 O'Malley Road  
Anchorage, AK 99507  
Sent from my iPhone

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**From:** [Sen. Click Bishop](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Support for HB55  
**Date:** Sunday, May 08, 2022 12:26:31 PM

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**From:** Mary Kiewik <mjkiewik@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 30, 2022 3:21 PM  
**To:** Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bert Stedman <Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof <Sen.Natasha.VonImhof@akleg.gov>; Sen. David Wilson <Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bill Wielechowski <Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Support for HB55

Senators,

My name is Mary Kiewik and I have been an Alaskan resident residing in South Anchorage for close to 50 years. I am writing today in support of HB55. I have three sons and two of them are currently firefighters with the Anchorage Fire Department.

HB 55 would correct a terrible mistake that took away a reasonable retirement for our first responders. As it stands, most of Alaska's public safety employees (including firefighters) don't receive social security or SBS. All that they get is a 5% match in a 401A which is less than social security and most private sector plans. Despite pledges of support for first responders from elected officials on both sides of the political spectrum, this clearly demonstrates the lack of value that has been placed on the service provided by these dedicated employees.

The current Tier 4 system is nearly the worst example of a public employee retirement system that can be found in the whole nation. All across the state we are struggling to fill positions with qualified people and a major part of the reason is that there is no future in it for them. My own sons, and many of their coworkers, are looking hard at whether they can continue their careers in Alaska, or if they need to move to another state that offers retirement plans befitting a person who has dedicated their lives to public safety.

Once again I urge you to pass HB 55 so that Alaska can continue in our tradition of top notch public safety through the efforts of our first responders.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Mary Kiewik



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**From:** [Sen. Click Bishop](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** FW: HB 55  
**Date:** Sunday, May 08, 2022 12:26:27 PM

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**From:** Brian Kramp <kramperb@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 30, 2022 3:09 PM  
**To:** Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bert Stedman <Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof <Sen.Natasha.VonImhof@akleg.gov>; Sen. David Wilson <Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bill Wielechowski <Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** HB 55

My name is Brian Kramp, I am an Anchorage firefighter. I am writing in support of HB55. This legislation is critical for Public Safety in Alaska because our current retirement plan is simply inadequate. Tier 4 employees will not have enough to retire with. I believe retention is going to be a costly issue for the State. If we can incentivize retention, cost savings will be realized.

Thanks for your consideration.  
Brian Kramp

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**From:** Sen. Click Bishop  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Subject:** FW: HB55  
**Date:** Sunday, May 08, 2022 12:26:21 PM

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**From:** Joshua Blume <joshblume7@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 30, 2022 1:42 PM  
**To:** Sen. Bill Wielechowski <Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov>; Sen. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>; Sen. David Wilson <Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof <Sen.Natasha.VonImhof@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bert Stedman <Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** HB55

Hello, My name is Joshua Blume, I am an Anchorage Firefighter. I am writing in support of HB55. This legislation is critical for public safety in Alaska because the current Tier 4 plan retirement system is failing its employees and newer members to the workforce. I have been working for the municipality of anchorage for the past 12 years serving the great people of anchorage. In my time I have seen extremely good, beneficial employees leave due to the fact that they can get a pension and largely better retirement at a different location. This in my opinion is easy to fix and one of the biggest problems with employee retention.

Currently as a Anchorage Firefighter thousands and thousands of dollars were spent on recruitment, testing, and training go into creating an employee anchorage deserves. In my short time at AFD I have seen many people who have been trained and put time and money into leave for places in the country with a defined benefit(Pension). These moves typically happen within the 1-3 year range of employment and essentially is the city training great people for other municipalities to keep.

I believe HB55 is a reasonable solution that puts the risk on the employer, employees, and the retirees. This seems fair given that not one single part is holding all the risk like in the past. In my experience systems where everyone has some skin in the game seem to do better and benefit more than a single entity holding all risk. I would love to see HB55 pass and see the state keep the great people that grew up here as employees, to keep the money it spends training and recruiting in state and benefiting the state. Thank you for the consideration and being accepting to this letter.

- Joshua Blume Firefighter AFD

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

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**From:** [Sen. Click Bishop](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** FW: HB 55  
**Date:** Sunday, May 08, 2022 12:26:16 PM

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**From:** John Kiewik <john.kiewik@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 30, 2022 1:08 PM  
**To:** Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bert Stedman <Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof <Sen.Natasha.Vonimhof@akleg.gov>; Sen. David Wilson <Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bill Wielechowski <Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** HB 55

Support for HB55

"My name is John Kiewik, I was an Anchorage firefighter for 37 years. I am writing in support of HB55. This legislation will help retain highly trained public safety personnel. You only have to look at the past week to see how a 401k performs.

It is a sad commentary that Alaska seeks to treat Police and Firefighters so poorly. Please do the right thing and pass HB 55 into law.

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**From:** [Sen. Click Bishop](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Support for HB55  
**Date:** Sunday, May 08, 2022 12:26:12 PM

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**From:** Lauren Casey <laurenwillert@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 30, 2022 12:53 PM  
**To:** Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bert Stedman <Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof <Sen.Natasha.VonImhof@akleg.gov>; Sen. David Wilson <Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bill Wielechowski <Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Support for HB55

Hello,

My name is Lauren Casey, I am married to an Anchorage firefighter. I am writing in support of HB55. This legislation is critical for Public Safety in Alaska because our current retirement plan offering (Tier 4) does not set our family up for success in retirement. This is a disservice to our public safety employees and is hurtful to the men and women who have hearts for service and want to make and keep our State the amazing place to live that it is. The retirement currently offered (Tier 4) is a 401(A) match of only 5% which is less than any private sector company offering, public safety employees do not receive social security benefits regardless of if they worked outside public safety previously. When planning for retirement we cannot trust that this system will provide for us and leaves us to make our own safety net for retirement. Whether that is with second jobs here or with considerations of moving to a state where public safety officials are more valued.

Please support HB55. This is a reasonable solution that will put Alaska back on par with other states' retirement offerings.

Please support the men and women who have chosen this line of work and who take such pride in their employment and their home state.

Thank you,  
Lauren Casey

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**From:** [Sen. Click Bishop](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** FW: HB55  
**Date:** Sunday, May 08, 2022 12:26:06 PM

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**From:** Kevin Menkens <kevinmenkens@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 30, 2022 12:02 PM  
**To:** Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bert Stedman <Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof <Sen.Natasha.VonImhof@akleg.gov>; Sen. David Wilson <Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bill Wielechowski <Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** HB55

State Senators,

Tier 4 was not set up to provide adequate benefits to public safety members, it was set up to pay off the unfunded liability of legacy tiers. I have personally worked under the Tier 4 retirement plan as a State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry employee for 14 years and now serve my community as an Anchorage Fire Department employee. At no time has the commitment to myself or my fellow employees felt adequate to fund a retirement in today's society. I have seen countless quality state and municipal employees leave employment under the tier 4 system for the guarantees a defined benefits system offers. These fine men and women received excellent training and experience at great expense ultimately decided to leave because the commitment to them was lacking.

Please consider HB55 a step in the right direction.

Probationary Firefighter,  
Kevin Menkens

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**From:** [Sen. Click Bishop](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Please support House Bill 55  
**Date:** Sunday, May 08, 2022 12:26:00 PM

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**From:** chip serns <chipserns@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 30, 2022 11:54 AM  
**To:** Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bert Stedman <Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof <Sen.Natasha.VonImhof@akleg.gov>; Sen. David Wilson <Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bill Wielechowski <Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Please support House Bill 55

Hello,

I am writing to encourage your support of HB55.

I am a firefighter with the Anchorage Fire Department. I am heavily involved with the training of new employees, specifically paramedics. I am experiencing ongoing frustration at our departments inability to retain personnel after they have gone through their training. This exodus of good employees is a direct result on the shortcomings of the Tier 4 retirement plan. I will spend months training a paramedic to be able to work independently at our department standards, only for them to leave AFD for employment at a department with a more desirable retirement package. Neighboring departments in the lower 48 are aware of our retirement shortcomings and are using this as leverage to incentivize and take our employees. We are training them and other communities are benefiting from their service. This hemorrhage of talent and skill can be controlled by the passage of HB55. Please lend your support to this bill to help us recruit and retain the caliber of employees that our community deserves.

Thank you for your time and service,

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Chip Serns, Firefighter Paramedic, Anchorage Fire  
Department, Station 12 A shift

phn (907) 230-8681

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**From:** [Sen. Click Bishop](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Families in Support for HB55  
**Date:** Sunday, May 08, 2022 12:25:53 PM

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**From:** Britt, Joy D <[jdbritt@anthc.org](mailto:jdbritt@anthc.org)>  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 30, 2022 10:53 AM  
**To:** Sen. Click Bishop <[Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov](mailto:Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov)>; Sen. Bert Stedman <[Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov](mailto:Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov)>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <[Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov](mailto:Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov)>; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof <[Sen.Natasha.VonImhof@akleg.gov](mailto:Sen.Natasha.VonImhof@akleg.gov)>; Sen. David Wilson <[Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov](mailto:Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov)>; Sen. Donny Olson <[Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov](mailto:Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov)>; Sen. Bill Wielechowski <[Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov](mailto:Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov)>  
**Subject:** Families in Support for HB55

Good morning, Alaska representatives.

My name is Joy Britt and I am a proud wife of an Anchorage Fire Department Captain. I am 100% in support of HB55. How do you and the State of Alaska value our first responders? My husband has a gun pointed at him in the line of duty. He suffers PTSD from this act and still gets up and performs his job for the good of the public. Our responders deserve more.

As a family member of these heroes, I see firsthand how this legislation is critical for Public Safety in Alaska because of various reasons:

1. The current retirement plan (Tier 4) sets our public safety employees up for failure in retirement.
  - Three independent projections (from the DOA, the State CIO Bob Mitchell, and independent actuary) have shown that public safety employees are highly likely to run out of money in retirement
  - Most public safety employees in AK do not receive social security or SBS \*\* This is so important to our family. How can we rest at night knowing we are not able to receive these much needed benefits in the future?
  - They only receive a 5% match in a 401(A) account; which is less than a social security contribution would be anywhere in the private sector.
  
2. Alaska is losing money and valuable experience with our current retirement system
  - AK can no longer compete with the lower 48 when trying to recruit public safety employees, we are at a clear disadvantage!
  - You cannot find a public safety retirement plan like Tier 4 anywhere else in the country.
  - Communities across the state struggle to fill public safety positions, this is substantiated by testimony from chief officers of multiple different fire, police, and correctional agencies across the state.
  - Chief officers have testified about the substantial increase in retention problems with Tier 4 employees, this is evidenced by not only testimony but also



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documents like the DPS Recruitment & Retention Plan Overview 2018-2023.

- We should expect to see additional costs to the state such as increased worker's compensation costs as our departments become staffed with an older workforce that lacks the financial security to retire.

### **Why is HB 55 is a reasonable solution ?**

- Reasonable costs in line with what the private sector and other states offer (less than other states in many cases)
- Benefits drastically reduced from previous defined benefit tiers
- Well-thought out and crafted plan modeled after the most successful plans in the country
- Safeguard mechanisms in place to prevent unfunded liability from occurring
- Very promising funded status projections from not only an independent actuary, but the State's actuary who testified that in order to model the plan funded status dropping below 90% to trigger the safeguard mechanisms, they had to create "a rather draconian scenario and it's probably not very likely to materialize but we have to create a very poor asset return scenario .... so we chose a 0% return for 5 years, then a 2% return for the next 5 years..." (average 1% return over 10 years)
- Shared Risk - employees, the state, and retirees all share in the risk so that no one group is left holding the liability
- Hybrid Plan - defined benefit with a defined contribution medical component (exact same as current Tier 4 - 3% of average PERS salary into an HRA account, NO pre-medicare healthcare plan coverage)

Our Public safety members face risk in their jobs every day, they measure it and deal with it appropriately; we ask the legislature to do the same.

**Please consider all they do for us and I ask you to please think about your families when doing this.**

Joy D. Britt, MPH, Senior Program Manager  
Contamination Support Program  
Department of Community Environment and Health  
Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium  
4500 Diplomacy Dr., Suite 435, Anchorage, AK 99508  
(907)729-5630 // [jdbritt@anthc.org](mailto:jdbritt@anthc.org) // [www.anthc.org](http://www.anthc.org)

"Dena'inaq elnen'aq' gheshtnu ch'q'u yeshdu"

"I live and work on the land of the Dena'ina."

- A translation by Sondra Shaginoff-Stuart and Joel Isaak



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**From:** [Sen. Click Bishop](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** FW: HB55  
**Date:** Sunday, May 08, 2022 12:25:46 PM

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-----Original Message-----

From: Isabel Weiser <[akisabel@me.com](mailto:akisabel@me.com)>  
Sent: Saturday, April 30, 2022 10:16 AM  
To: Sen. Click Bishop <[Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov](mailto:Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov)>; Sen. Bert Stedman <[Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov](mailto:Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov)>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <[Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov](mailto:Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov)>; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof <[Sen.Natasha.VonImhof@akleg.gov](mailto:Sen.Natasha.VonImhof@akleg.gov)>; Sen. David Wilson <[Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov](mailto:Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov)>; Sen. Donny Olson <[Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov](mailto:Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov)>; Sen. Bill Wielechowski <[Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov](mailto:Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov)>  
Subject: HB55

Good morning,

My name is Isabel Weiser and I am writing in support of HB55. This legislation is critical for Public Safety in Alaska because our current retirement plan (Tier 4) sets our public safety employees up for failure in retirement.

Three independent projections (from the DOA, the State CIO Bob Mitchell, and independent actuary) have shown that public safety employees are likely to run out of money in retirement. Most of the public safety employees in AK do not receive social security benefits or SBS. There is only a 5% match in the 401(A) account; which is less than a social security contribution would be anywhere in the private sector. This is unfortunately the value that the state has placed on our first responders.

Inorder for Alaska to stay competitive with the lower 48, and retain our public safety professionals, change must be made. That change is HB55.

Thank you for your support on HB55 and your support of the public safety professionals in Alaska

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**From:** [Sen. Click Bishop](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Support for HB55  
**Date:** Sunday, May 08, 2022 12:25:42 PM

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**From:** Evan Kressly <evan.g.kressly@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 30, 2022 9:57 AM  
**To:** Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bert Stedman <Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof <Sen.Natasha.VonImhof@akleg.gov>; Sen. David Wilson <Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bill Wielechowski <Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Support for HB55

Good Morning,

My name is Evan Kressly, I am an Anchorage Firefighter, and I am writing in support of HB55. This legislation is critical for public safety in Alaska for many reasons. A few of those are;

Alaska is losing money and valuable experience every year with our current retirement system. AK is no longer competitive compared to the lower 48, and during my three and half years with AFD, I have seen multiple individuals accept jobs in the lower 48 and leave AFD, with the number one reason being our retirement system. Alaska's Tier 4 retirement system is the only one in the country you will find, and there is a reason for that. It does not offer the financial support our public safety professionals need in retirement after their career. This is a known problem that has been ignored since 2006. Communities across the state struggle to fill public safety positions, this is substantiated by testimony from chief officers of multiple different fire, police, and correctional agencies throughout the state of Alaska.

I appreciate your current and future support on HB55 and supporting Alaska's public safety professionals.

Evan Kressly