
From: Rick D [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, May 03, 2024 7:46 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: HB 232 Public Comment

To the committee members:

I would like to take this moment to ask for your support HB 232. As the bill is crafted I want to make sure that the members of the committee understand the term "Permanently and Totally Disabled" that is used, also known as "P&T" in terms the Veterans Administration uses. Less than 3% of Disabled Veterans nationally are classified at 100% P&T, and in order to get this designation a Veteran is subjected to multiple exams and reviews over time by the VA, it is not a rating that is given out lightly by the VA.

It takes years of exams and review to achieve this rating and what it means in simple terms is that the Veteran has 1 or more disabilities that impact their lives in a way that will have significant impact for the rest of the Veterans life and are not going to substantially improve. These are referred to as "Static Conditions". Meaning they will only degrade as we age and further impact our lives.

Passing this legislation onto the full house and hopefully to the Governor for signature is a way to ensure Disabled Veterans have access to our PERS accounts so that we may have income stability for the future. For those of us on the older defined benefit system it simply lets us begin to draw our pensions that we have paid into. This is something that the State of Alaska already has a liability for and letting 100% disabled veterans retire without penalty under these conditions of the bill will actually save the state money. This is because the replacements coming to fill our jobs will be Tier 4 or Defined Contribution employees. In terms of costs of medical insurance for these retirees it's largely a non factor since 100% disabled Veterans receive excellent care from the VA for free. Many of us do not want to switch doctors anyway so we would stay with the system that has supported us these years.

In regards to 100% disabled Veterans who are Tier 4 or Defined Contribution, there is no liability for the state of Alaska, it simply lets the veteran have access to the funds they have already contributed.

One final addition to this bill I would like to also support is purchased military time counting towards our 30 years employment requirement to retire under "normal" PERS retirement. This service is paid for optionally by the members to the State of Alaska for those years (up to 5). I paid \$75,000 to purchase my maximum 5 years towards my 30 year pension. No one gave me anything, I earned and purchased my time with my own money. Alaska is one of the few states that does not allow military time to count towards a "normal" or full retirement . It's essentially "extra" years at the end that count for your "High 5" multiplier but not your actual service.

I urge you to support and pass this legislation that could have such a positive impact on 100% disabled veterans such as myself who have served the state of Alaska for many years.

If I can be of any help to the committee I am willing to assist .

Rick Dembroski
Wasilla, Alaska

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