

My name is Steven Pondelis. I am a retiree from the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office where I served as a Detention Deputy for 34.5 years. I started in 1987 and recently retired in 2021. I am writing this letter to voice my opposition to adding the 911 Telecommunications group to the Corrections PERA. My reasons are as follows. First, our fund was set up due to the fact that we have constant inmate contact and the inherent dangers that go along with it. I have been assaulted several times, both physically with injuries, which I am still dealing with, as well as being verbally threatened. This has even happened while off duty. I have also seen many of my co workers assaulted resulting in permanent injuries, as well as seeing others suffer from mental breakdowns. Many others, including myself, have contacted COVID due to our constant exposure to inmates.

Second, per my understanding, they would be given a retroactive credit of years served at the Corrections accrual rate. I feel that is a injustice and a insult to those of us who are actually in the Corrections field, who started pre 1999, and did not get that benefit. Out of my 34.5 years of service I still get 12.5 years worth of my pension payouts at the Coordinated rate. Adding the 911 group in the Corrections fund with a automatic credit would be irresponsible in creating a unreasonable financial hardship on our otherwise very healthy fund.

Please understand, in no way am I intending to demean the importance of the 911 Operators job. I understand it is very stressful and has it's own unique difficulties. I just don't believe this proposal is a reasonable solution.

Steven Pondelis  
HCSO 1987-2021