

To Members of the Commission:

03-17-23

We are a husband-wife Minnesota metro law enforcement couple, one of whom is a nearly 21 year sworn veteran and the other of whom voluntarily left the field after over 11 years of sworn service. We are also family and close friends with many police and fire people.

We believe that passing of the proposed Bill will cause extensive, and possibly life-threatening destruction to brothers and sisters in police and fire occupations, who already suffer deep losses and significant pain, along with their families, when having to part from their public safety jobs. These same people already undergo the existing daunting separation process due to mental or physical on-duty injuries. The proposed Bill is harmful, wrong, unsympathetic and unjust. This Bill fails our police and fire partners who have honorable medical separation cases, as well as those who may have to face a medical retirement someday. This Bill does not appear to affect police and fire people of retirement age, who may have been granted medical retirements for reasons that would not pass by today's standards. If this Bill is designed in any way to combat mismanaged finances/investments or erroneously approved medical retirement applications, this should not be done on the shoulders of the people with integrity who leave for legitimate duty-related mental and physical injuries, and are not yet of retirement age. But, under this proposed Bill, medically retired police and fire members not yet at retirement age will have to pay additional financial, physical, mental and emotional costs, beyond what they already do.

This Bill would personally affect some of our, and many other people's loved ones who suffer legitimate medical career injuries, and subsequently medically retire. They have proudly and tirelessly served, sacrificed for and protected the public with integrity, dedication and hard work, in careers they were called to do and planned to do until retirement age, all while trying to support their families. These humans have subsequently sacrificed their own health, safety, wellbeing and time with loved ones (who have in-turn suffered mental, spiritual, physical and emotional tolls just by loving someone with duty-related injuries). Some of these police and fire people, who were willing for years to lay their lives down to protect their communities, suffer with such intense, dark and lasting agony, feelings of brokenness and separation-related guilt, that it was nearly impossible for them to initially leave the professions, partners and careers that they have been devoted to. But, as a last resort of hope, they pursued a medical retirement from the profession after on-duty injuries, and have sought mental, spiritual, emotional and physical care, avoided triggers and reminders of their duty-related injuries, and taken medication to try and start a new journey toward healing, but they are still not guaranteed a lasting cure. So, the thoughts of these people being forced to undergo *further* medical retirement case scrutinization and revictimization for *years*, *AND* having their earned medical retirement benefits and potential earned income penalized and compromised, should they even find and maintain gainful employment, puts additional hopelessness, helplessness and lack of purpose, on an already at-risk population. This begs the question as to whether proponents of the Bill have considered the cost/benefit of the financials the Bill aims to offset -vs- the possibility of tragic rising suicide rates among the impacted public safety professionals jeopardized by these proposals.

Please, in good-faith, consider the far-reaching, negative implications and re-victimization that this Bill will impart upon non-retirement age police and fire personnel who are already struggling due to legitimate medical retirement separations.

Respectfully,

Alison and Chris Hetland