

I, along with several others, have recently been made aware about the changes being proposed in this bill. I do not feel as though anyone has fully considered the detrimental side effects of such changes. If you say that you have, please think again, and think longer and harder about what these changes are doing to so many out there, including myself.

Those leaving the work-place due to such debilitating events and have thus received a disability benefit already don't see it as a benefit. How can anyone see this as a benefit when your entire life has changed. Maybe you don't care to hear, but I have seen more dead babies in one week than you ever will. I have attempted to hold more shattered chunks of skulls together than you could ever even dream of; brain matter squished between my fingers and the dead white eyes staring point blank at me. I have tried to plug up so many holes on human bodies, from gunshots or stab wounds, and have attempted to wipe away so much coagulated blood that it would truly make you nauseous. I have felt their pulse slow to nothing, heard them fighting to breathe one more time, and none of them ever making it. I have seen so much death, more than one should ever have to see, yet this is deemed and coined the term as earning a 'benefit.'

After going through psychological test after test, telling my story, repeating the traumatic events time and time again; completely re-triggering everything for me, bringing everything to the forefront of my brain. Simply trying to continue to wade in the deep waters, to continue to fight to move on and persevere, when really I don't have a lot of hope left to hold on to. Already feeling so full of lead that anything could cause me to sink to the depths. I get told this bill is more than likely going to pass and there isn't anything I can do about it....and it will be for the "better." That it is something "positive" for first responders.

PERA has provided a brochure with some statements on them indicating various changes the bill is proposing and one of those is this:

- "The purpose for the offset changes are to make total compensation for disability recipients who return to work (income = disability benefit + reemployment earnings) **comparable** to compensation for active members (income = salary - PERA contributions)."

Consider this: A.) You forgot to factor in the additional PERA contributions into the 'disability recipients who return to work); since that is what **your** new proposal includes. And B.) You're proposing to **punish** those who have gone out and attempted to become reemployed in a non-public safety profession by making them pay 11.8% (current active member contribution rate) back into PERA.

- If this is allegedly COMPARABLE, and I am paying an additional 11.8%, yet I am not earning pension time, how is this comparable?
 - It's not.

- You can't make us pay for an ACTIVE rate, when we aren't getting the same benefits of time. I am not earning any more pension time by putting in the same amount; this doesn't make sense and you know it.

You're punishing those who are trying to overcome all odds, trying to at least wade above those waters. With my 'years of service' on, I will be getting roughly 40K per year for my duty disability. Now, based on these proposed off-sets, if I make approx. 12K, I have to give all that back as my dues**. So, I am back to square one, living off of 40K.

You may not even have read this far, because I don't know how much faith I can really put into, not just politicians, but people in general. I feel at every turn, people have let me down. I feel like this is just another blow I have to take, another added weight to my burden, causing me to sink.

Don't become another added weight to my belt dragging me to the depths.

Please,
Vote, No.

-Duty Disability Recipient