

Members of the Commission,

Please vote no on HF 1234/SF 1959. After dedicating 20 years to the city of Minneapolis, and paying into PERA to find out that the new legislation will force everyone to take a larger penalty than what we expected is gut wrenching. After the riots, it was an excruciating life altering experience to be forced to leave a profession that I've wanted to do since I was 15. I am 46 and I am a family of 5 that I provide for.

I am saddened at how many officers were forced to leave their dream job of helping others and protecting the innocent, after the riots so deeply troubled so many officers.

I myself spent 3 days inside and outside of my 2nd home, the 3rd precinct in what was basically a war against us police officers. The mayor, the chief and the media did nothing but fuel the anger and violence that was occurring. And as traumatic as it was to be under attack for a week straight, it was magnified by the lack of leadership, and the withholding of resources, in order to protect ourselves. Maybe the Chief wanted those of us they left inside the 3rd Pct on day 3 to die.

I spent almost an entire year, going to therapy in order to get myself to a point that I could go back out in public and be able to socialize with others. As with most diagnosed with PTSD daily tasks do not come easy and it takes therapy and lots of work to get to a point in life that most consider normal.

Now that I am able to do those things, I also was able to get a job to supplement the minimal disability pension that I receive. The pension amount I receive doesn't even pay all of my bills. And it sure doesn't feed my three growing children.

This new bill is a penalty to anyone that is trying to regain meaningful employment and a healthy mental health status. I don't understand how you could possibly change the rules on hundreds of officers forced to leave.

This bill that is introduced causes additional penalties to the officers that are trying to re-gain employment and it re-traumatizes them for having to leave under mental duress. I know I personally felt my mental health deteriorate the day I found out how many agencies that were supposed to support us, helped draft this bill to penalize us. It wasn't an easy adjustment out of Law Enforcement and this adds additional financial difficulties and mental anguish.

All I ask, is that for those of us that were forced to retire be afforded the opportunity to try and salvage our mental health and re-gain employment without penalties so we can live the rest of our lives and be able to provide for our children.

When I was forced to leave I had just finished my Bachelors degree in Criminal Justice and was promoted to Lieutenant. I had a bright future ahead of me and all that was taken away. I spent all of my adult life dedicated to helping others. After being diagnosed with PTSD I was not longer able to do what I loved. It is not just a diagnosis but it's a physical and mental burden that I have to live with daily. Yes-therapy has helped me immensely but I still have anxiety and many undesirable physical characteristics that affect my daily life.

The officers that were forced to leave the profession they love should not be treated as though it was a choice and they chose wrong. We gave our everything for others and now when we try to rebuild our lives, we are questioned, penalized and re-traumatized all over again.

I get to re-apply for my disability benefits 8 more times until I am 55. I get to hear over and over again how damaged I am from my 20 years in Law Enforcement. I get to worry for the next 9 years if my pension and healthcare will get taken away by the PERA board. If for any reason you think this decision was taken lightly by any officer that left you are 100% wrong. It is the absolute worst case scenario for how anyone should be treated as they seek mental health help.

Please vote NO as this bill is incredibly hurtful to those of us affected and for any officer that may suffer a disability during their career.

Lindsay Herron