



THE HENNEPIN COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF PARAMEDICS AND EMTs
1325 WINTER ST, SUITE 102. MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55413

03/31/2024

Re: HF 4666 (Wolgamott) SF 4878 (Frentz) Police & Fire Pension Fairness Law

Dear Chair Her and Committee Members,

On behalf of my association and its members, I am writing you today to urge you to support HF 4666 and SF 4878, a bill that would modestly increase the post-retirement adjustment cost of living adjustment (COLA) for retired members of the PERA Police and Fire Plan. The bill would also reduce the current waiting period to receive an initial COLA from three years to one year.

On March 14, 2024, the PERA Board of Directors took historic action by supporting this legislation with a 9-1 vote to remedy the serious impact of inflation on our members and their survivors. For ever a decade, the PERA General Plan has provided a higher COLA than the PERA Police and Fire Plan, causing a significant burden on public safety workers by comparison. Over the last three years, the cost of living has increased by 17% and our permanent post-retirement adjustments have gone up only 3%, and in the case of those who retired in the last three years, their increase has been 0%.

The cost to the state to bring our current 1.0% COLA in line with the maximum PERA General Plan of 1.5% has a price tag of \$28 million annually. The cost to reduce the current punitive three-year waiting period and make it the same as the one-year period for all other public employees is \$12 million annually. We acknowledge that \$40 million is a lot of money, however our members and other first responders are suffering significant economic loss each year this inequity goes on.

Our members do not receive Social Security. We have no genuine cost of living protection that other workers have. Please consider supporting HF 4666 and SF 4878 to make fair and equitable changes to the post-retirement COLA adjustments for first responders.

Respectfully,

Shane Hallow

President

Hennepin County Association of Paramedics and EMTs