



April 1, 2024

Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement
120 State Capitol
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Representative Kaohly Vang Her, Chair, and members of the committee:

We are collectively writing from the Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association (MPPOA), Law Enforcement Labor Services (LELS), Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA), and Minnesota Sheriffs Association (MSA). **Our organizations support House File 5137 (Wolgamott and Novotny) Public Employees Police & Fire Retirement plan; payment of normal retirement annuity without reduction or suspension upon employment.**

This vital bill for public safety aims to enable police and fire to continue their service without facing financial penalties when they reach retirement age. Currently there are a significant number of active officers approaching retirement. There are also 1,000 open positions (down 1,000 officers – over 10% in the state). Of the 408 law enforcement agencies, there are 284 agencies trying to hire licensed police officers. Establishing a well-structured reemployment program is essential.

Recruitment challenges are prevalent, with a noticeable decline in applicants locally and nationally. House File 5137 directly addresses this pressing need by incentivizing retired police and fire officers to rejoin service without impacting their retirement annuity. This initiative not only encourages seasoned professionals to stay engaged but also enriches the skill and knowledge pool within agencies, leading to improved law enforcement outcomes for our communities.

Currently, there is no legislative state funding allocated for this proposal. (Funding is needed!)

House File 5137 would significantly contribute to enhancing public safety and helping maintain the services Minnesotans expect from our state law agencies.

Sincerely,

Executive Director Jim Mortenson
Law Enforcement Labor Services

Executive Director James Stuart
Minnesota Sheriffs Association

Executive Director Jeff Potts
Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association

Executive Director Brian Peters
Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association