



Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement  
Centennial Office Building, 1st Floor  
658 Cedar St.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026

**RE: SF4464 (Howe) - Health insurance coverage continuation for peace officers and firefighters disabled in the line of duty**

Dear Chairs Frentz and O’Driscoll and Members of the Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement:

On behalf of cities and counties across Minnesota, the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), League of Minnesota Cities (LMC), Minnesota Inter-County Association (MICA), and Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities write to express opposition to SF 4464, a bill that seeks to expand eligibility for continued employer-paid health insurance coverage by modifying current law to increase the duration for mandated employer health care coverage of certain disabilities.

We deeply respect and support Minnesota’s peace officers and firefighters, particularly those who experience injury in the line of duty. Proposals to expand benefits must be considered within the broader context of recent legislative actions and the fiscal realities facing local employers as well as broader stakeholder consultation and agreement that has recently accompanied sizable pensions and duty disability benefit policy changes.

In 2023, the Legislature enacted landmark, bipartisan legislation establishing a first-of-its-kind program providing public safety officers with up to 32 weeks of paid, protected mental health leave and treatment. This historic investment—supported by a \$100 million one-time appropriation—recognized the increasing prevalence and impact of mental health-related duty disabilities and ensured both wage replacement and employer-paid health insurance coverage during periods when an employee is unable to return to public safety work.

Importantly, existing law already provides continued employer-paid health insurance coverage for employees who suffer qualifying duty disabilities, including physical injuries. SF 4464 would significantly expand this framework by extending the duration of employer-paid coverage for certain physical injuries, raising important questions about consistency

in how different types of injuries are treated under state law. Any distinction between physical and mental health conditions warrants careful consideration, particularly in light of federal mental health parity requirements.

Additionally, SF 4464 does not include an appropriation to offset the increased costs associated with this expanded benefit. As a result, the proposal effectively creates an unfunded mandate on local governments. Without additional state support, these costs will add to the budgetary strain of the dwindling Public Safety Officer Benefit Account—which is already less than 50% of its original 2023 appropriation—placing further strain on city and county budgets and ultimately shifting financial pressure onto local taxpayers through increased levies.

At a time when both the Legislature and local governments share concerns about rising property taxes and long-term fiscal sustainability, it is critical that any expansion of benefits be paired with a clear funding strategy and a comprehensive understanding of long-term cost impacts.

For these reasons, we believe additional study and stakeholder engagement are necessary before advancing this proposal. Specifically, further analysis is needed regarding the scope of injuries covered, the interaction with existing benefit structures, thought compliance with federal requirements, and the full fiscal impact on local employers.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input on SF 4464 and stand ready to work with the author and stakeholders to ensure a balanced and sustainable approach moving forward.

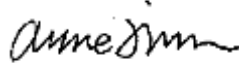
Sincerely,



Matthew Hilgart  
Deputy Director  
AMC



Nathan Jesson  
Executive Director  
MICA



Anne Finn  
Intergovernmental  
Relations Director  
LMC



Bradley Peterson  
Executive Director  
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