



DATE: May 5, 2026

Letter in Support of SF4464 (Howe) / HF4988 (Novotny) – Delete-Everything Amendment S4464-DE2

Dear Members of the Commission:

Law Enforcement Labor Services (LELS), the Minnesota State Patrol Troopers Association (MSPTA), the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension Agents Association (BCAAA), and the Minnesota Department of Corrections Fugitive Apprehension Agents Association (FAAA) collectively represent more than 8,800 law enforcement officers, firefighters, and public safety professionals across Minnesota.

We are writing in support of SF4464 (Howe) / HF4988 (Novotny), specifically the delete-everything amendment S4464-DE2.

This amendment addresses a critical gap created by unintended consequences of legislation passed in 2025. We believe the consequences of this change were largely unintended, yet they have left a group of experienced public safety professionals exposed at a particularly vulnerable stage of their careers. Specifically, members of the Public Employees Police and Fire (P&F) Plan who are age 55 and older with 20 or more years of service currently have no meaningful duty disability protection and, most critically, have lost the continued health insurance protection that was previously available until age 65 if they suffer a career-ending injury.

Today, approximately 706 members—roughly 6 percent of the P&F workforce—are left without protection under current law. This is not an abstract policy issue; it is a real and immediate gap affecting hundreds of police officers, deputies, and firefighters who have devoted decades of service to their communities.

The proposed amendment corrects this problem by restoring duty disability benefits and related protections. Under the amendment, eligible members would receive disability benefits for up to 60 months (five years), providing a critical period of financial and health coverage protection following a duty-related, career-ending injury.

In addition to the immediate harm caused by the loss of benefits, current law raises serious legal concerns. The elimination of continued health insurance coverage for members age 55 and older may implicate federal and state age discrimination laws, including the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) and the Minnesota Human Rights Act. Unlike policies that permissibly grant benefits at a certain age, current law removes protections based solely on age—creating potential legal vulnerability.

This amendment also provides a practical and responsible path forward. By restoring benefits for up to five years (60 months), it creates a necessary bridge period. This ensures that affected members are not left unprotected while the legislatively authorized work group undertakes the careful, collaborative effort needed to develop long-term solutions for all members of the plan.

Just as importantly, this is a critical retention issue. It is already extremely difficult to recruit and retain public safety professionals across Minnesota. Removing protections for experienced personnel only exacerbates this challenge by encouraging early departures and discouraging continued service beyond age 55. Restoring these benefits helps retain highly trained officers and firefighters, preserves institutional knowledge, and supports workforce stability at a time when it is urgently needed.

This approach allows policymakers and stakeholders to work together without breaking the promise made to those who protect and serve. It ensures continuity, fairness, and stability while a comprehensive, data-driven reform effort moves forward.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge your support for the S4464-DE2 amendment.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to Minnesota's law enforcement officers and firefighters.

Respectfully,

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