

To the Senate Pension Oversight Commission,

I have been a Minneapolis Police Officer for a long time. I have been involved in countless police calls and incidents where I have experienced traumatic events, i.e. shootings, car wrecks, bodily injuries and deaths, partners seriously injured, officer involved shootings, and riots. 99% of them I have bottled up and/or have forgotten, but many have remained with me for many years in the form of nightmares, daydreams, and images that come in my head all of the time. These have brought on other consequences as well, i.e. marriage trouble, alcohol abuse, suicidal thoughts, sleepless nights, and other family troubles. I fought the battle for too long and feeling so hopeless I finally gave up this last summer. I couldn't go on any longer doing the job of a police officer. I didn't feel competent or safe. I thought I was a danger to other cops, citizens, and myself. Doctors informed me that I was experiencing PTSD and they have been treating me for it.

Since then, I have been waiting. I haven't heard why because no one from PERA has reached out to me. The incredibly lengthy process has caused extra stress on me and my family. I have been the provider for my family for a long time and now I am wondering how I am going to do that. I have gone through another assessment with the MMRO/PERA appointed psychiatrist, who was supposed to be unbiased. What I experienced felt anything but. It was less than an hour interview (he was late and finished early). It felt extremely rushed as he talked fast and wouldn't give me time to answer his questions. There were times he would tell me how I was feeling by answering for me. I came out of the interview with the impression that I was a suspect being interviewed. It quickly turned to once again that all is hopeless.

So, my question is, "What do I do now?" If the second assessment finds me to not have PTSD (which is what my assumption is due to the way it was conducted) and PERA says the same, are they saying I can go back to being a police officer? Are all my current symptoms of PTSD just in my head? What are all of these dreams, anxieties, irritabilities, feelings of guilt, anger, suicidal, sadness, hypervigilance, and loneliness that I still have? Am I now "safe" to be on patrol? I beg to differ. Do those of you hearing this today want me working the streets with the citizens of Minneapolis?

Or do I take on an entry level job or two to try and make ends meet and to have health benefits for my family (including likely paying for my own future PTSD therapy which I will need to do)? With all of the years I have paid into PERA and was an exceptional police officer for the City of Minneapolis, are they all forgotten? Was I of any value for putting my life on the line day in and day out? It doesn't feel like it.

Sincerely,

Anonymously living with PTSD