



Ohio House Pension Committee
HB 296, Interested Party Written Testimony
Chad Brown, Defiance Fire Department, Local 918
December 12, 2023

Chairman Mathews, Vice Chair King, Ranking Member Lightbody, and members of the House Pensions Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present written testimony as an Interested Party for House Bill 296. My name is Chad Brown, a firefighter for Defiance Fire Department, President of Local 918.

My Story

I have been a Defiance Fire Department for 21 years, President of Defiance Firefighters Local 918 for 13 years, and on Ohio Association of Professional Fire Fighters Legislative Committee.

Prior to working at Defiance, I was a volunteer for Grover Hill Volunteer Fire Department for 7 years. My first Career Fire Department was Elida Community Fire Company, Inc. which is now American Twp. FD. I spent 2 years there before testing and being hired in Defiance. My paramedic training was completed at Lima Technical College.

My Father Made Me Want To Be A Firefighter

My father was a Volunteer FF/ EMT when I was growing up, that put a drive in me to serve. When I was young, I suffered a laceration being a kid and required an ambulance to be transported to the ER. My father took care of me until the Fire Department came and then helped transport me to the hospital. His calmness, knowledge and ability to treat my injury made me want to be that person people needed. My injury required Neurosurgery to repair a severed nerve and an approximately 4 inch laceration.

Pensions Are Our Best Retention Tool

Pension did not play a role for me wanting to become a Firefighter, it was just what I was going to do. I couldn't imagine doing anything else. However, my first career job did not have a Public Pension Plan. That was a big factor with me deciding to take the Civil Service Exam at Defiance and eventually leaving for Defiance. Pension plays a huge role in staying with this career. There are several other careers that are Fire based and/or Service based, a lot of these types of careers make more money, but what they don't have is a Pension at the end of a long, rewarding, yet very tiring career. The comfort in knowing that at the end of serving the citizens of our Cities, missing your son's first JV Basketball game as a Freshman, countless other milestones, birthdays, and holidays there will be a secure, honorable Pension is a driving force keeping us moving through our careers.

Although this is a very honorable and rewarding career, I believe that one of the most rewarding aspects of it is our Pension. I also believe that it should be used as a recruitment tool. In this country, we have made it not only a point but an inherent responsibility to honor and serve those that have served us. As Firefighters, and the majority of us taxpayers in the Cities we serve, we believe this Equalization is necessary to continue our responsibility to those that served us.

I respectfully request you to vote in favor of HB 296.