

Ohio House Pension Committee

HB 296 Proponent Testimony

Scott Maynor

February 6, 2024

Chairman Mathews, Vice Chairwoman King, Ranking Member Piccolantonio and Members of the House Pensions Committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 296.

My name is Scott Maynor, and I am a member of the Lyndhurst Firefighters Association I.A.F.F. Local 1676. I have held leadership positions in my local as well as the Northern Ohio Firefighters Association. I was also elected as a Trustee on the Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund, serving from June 2006 to May 2010.

On July 24th 1986, the legislature enacted H.B. 721 which repealed the Ohio Police and Fire Pension Board's authority to set the employer contribution rates on the basis of the actuarial valuation. The Act froze the police employer contribution at 19.5% and the fire employer contribution at 24%. This was done in response to employers' concerns over increasing and fluctuating employer contribution rates. The Act also increased employee contribution rates for both police and fire to 9.5% from 8.5%. The employee rates since been raised to 12.25%.

It is important to note that prior to fixing the employer rates in 1986, the rates were steadily increasing. Most years prior to 1986 showed the fire rate to be higher than police. However, in the years after the rate was frozen, the police rate was higher than the fire rate many times.

While it is easy to understand why the legislature chose to freeze the rates back in 1986, with the benefit of hindsight, it appears to have been a mistake to freeze the rates at separate levels. House Bill 296 will correct the unequal contributions to our retirement system. Police and Fire members belong to the same retirement system, receive the same benefits and have been asked to make the same sacrifices to ensure the long-term stability of the pension system. It is long overdue that we ensure police officers and firefighters are treated fairly by contributing the same percentage for the same benefits. I respectfully request that you support and pass H.B. 296.

Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

Scott Maynor