



March 29, 2022

Chairman Brinkman, Vice Chair Lampton, Ranking member Miranda and members of the Insurance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 512. I am a firefighter/paramedic, past president, and current legislative chair of the Springfield Professional Firefighters, Local 333. I represent 130 firefighter paramedics from the city of Springfield. I am giving testimony today to urge you to support this bill. Like many of Ohio's jurisdictions Springfield has struggled to attract and retain public safety personnel. Just a few years ago our recruitment and retention rates began to change. In the 1990's and very early 2000's it was not uncommon to have as many as 800 candidates applying for a limited number of positions. Now we are fortunate if we have 100. Prior to 2007 our voluntary termination rate was less than 2% per year, after 2007 it has climbed as high as 8% per year. Both issues have combined to make a robust pension system more important than ever before. The stability of our pension system can make the public safety profession attractive to new recruits and provide current members a strong incentive to stay in this vital public safety profession.

In 2012 our pension system underwent changes to insure its long-term viability. These changes resulted in benefit cuts, increased employee contributions, lengthened service times, and impacted only the employees. The employers, however, have not seen a change since 1986. This change will bring employer contributions in line with the Ohio State Highway Patrol pension system.

Making this change is vital to ensure long term viability for the pension and for the future of the public safety workforce in Ohio. Our Public safety professionals provide critical services to the citizens of Ohio for a career and should have the peace of mind to know that they are protected in retirement by a stable well-funded pension system. In closing I urge your support of HB 512. Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrew Rigsbee, Firefighter/Paramedic, Legislative Chair
Springfield Professional Firefighters, Local 333