



Ohio Association of Professional Fire Fighters

140 E Town St., Suite 1225; Columbus OH 43215

Michael P. Taylor, President

William E. Quinn, Secretary/Treasurer

March 29, 2022

Chairman Brinkman, Ranking Member Miranda, Members of the Committee – I am honored to be with you today to discuss House Bill 512, which provides for responsible reform meant to modernize our police and fire pension fund.

I am here to represent over twelve thousand members who make up the Ohio Association of Professional Fire Fighters.

I am here to share with you – with the united voice of my membership – that we need your support for House Bill 512. And I want to thank representatives former officer Cindy Abrams and former firefighter and member of the IAFF and OAPFF Brian Baldrige for their sponsorship of this important legislation.



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Pension reform might not be the most exciting of bills for you to act upon. It might even, to some, be controversial. Certainly, it almost always means that someone is coming to you looking for money. In this case, though, we think it is a rare opportunity for good government to prevail. For once, we are not here under emergency circumstances. We are not here to ask for special treatment.

House Bill 512 recognizes an issue coming down the road and seeks a reasonable solution. And even if it isn't the most exciting piece of legislation you will contemplate, this bill might be among the most impactful the Police, Fire Fighters and Emergency Medical practitioners have had before you in many years.



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I know that the tens of thousands of first responders and their families are waiting to see what you will do.

By now you know the basics of the bill. We are asking for a phased-in increase of the employer contribution. A contribution that has not increased since 1986—that's 36 years. I do not know of anything that costs the same as it did 36 years ago. That is longer than many careers in law enforcement and firefighting. The people who were hired in 1986 are retirees now. They are enjoying their pension benefits, but they are also supportive of reform to ensure that the next generation gets to enjoy their pension too.

I want to use my time before you today to discuss two specific things.



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When I first participated in a press conference announcing this legislation and started talking about this proactive approach, our pension had an assumed rate of return of eight percent. However, since then, actuaries with the fund recommended and the board adopted a reduction to seven-point-five percent.

Our pension has always enjoyed a rate of return on the high end of comparable funds, and certainly among Ohio's public pensions. It speaks to the strength and good management of our fund that we have hit the mark year after year. The lowering of the assumed rate of return is responsible, but it also re-affirms why we are here and why we must act to protect the pensions of first responders.



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I also want to address something I heard during proponent testimony. The lone comment from the committee to the bill's sponsors was about restoring the Local Government Fund. I hope this committee knows where I, and my members, stand on the LGF. We have always supported increasing funding and will continue to do so. But House Bill 512 is not about the LGF. It shouldn't be contingent on the LGF. Just as municipalities should not depend on outside funding for public safety – because that outside funding can be gutted, as we've seen with the LGF – so we, all of us, must look inward, recognize that we have not asked for an employer share increase in 36 years, and find a way to get this done.



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Just as every retiree in our pension system had to when our health care benefit was changed to a stipend system, and we increased our employee contribution by 22 ½ percent.

We are asking you to increase the employer share. And we are asking you to do it over a period so that they can plan accordingly. This is good government. It is reasonable. It is responsible.

My members ask you to support those principles. Vote for reason, responsibility, and good government. Vote to support House Bill 512.

Thank you.