

Chairman Mathews, Vice-chair King, Ranking Member Lightbody, and members of the Ohio House Pension committee, my name is Jack Baker, and I am writing you today in support of Ohio House Bill 94.

I wanted to work in law enforcement beginning at a young age. After high school, I went to college and earned a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice. In 1999, I landed my dream job as a police officer with the City of Sidney where I worked for 19 years. For much of my career with Sidney, I felt supported and appreciated for the hard work that I was doing in my community. However, towards the end my tenure at the City of Sidney, a new chief and administration made it harder to come to work. This caused frustration, and the love for my career began subsiding. I knew that I only had six years left before retirement, but that seemed like a long time to work with little satisfaction.

In August of 2018, I was approached and offered a job by our Sheriff in Shelby County. I had not advertised to anyone that I was looking to make a change but somehow, he knew. I took a reduction in pay, but it was an opportunity that I couldn't pass. I would go back to working the road to protect and serve the citizens of our county which is why I entered law enforcement from the start. After talking with my wife, I accepted the position and became a Shelby County Sheriff's Deputy. My passion for law enforcement was back and I have had no regrets.

I knew at the time of my transition that OP&F and OPERS were two different retirement systems. What I did not know was how much they really did not coincide with each other. I have called and talk with both retirement systems and every time it seems like I get different answers. From what I understand, if I want to retire from OPERS I need more time in OPERS than my OP&F. That means I would have to have 20 years in OPERS before I can retire. I love my job, but 39 years in law enforcement is a long time to be working in this field. The one thing I could never understand is why I could not retire at 25 years. I am doing the same job and serving the same people.

This bill helps countless others like me. It also helps those who want a change but don't want to make the move because of the way the current law is written for retirement in law enforcement. I have personally talked with officers in that situation who don't want to deal with the hassle. As I stated before, I don't regret my move to the Sheriff's Office. However, I would like to receive a pension and not be required to work 39 years in order to do so.

I would like to thank the Chairman, Vice Chair, Ranking Member, and all the members of the pensions committee. You all do not receive the recognition you deserve for your commitment to the people of Ohio.

Thank You for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Jack Baker  
Minster, Ohio