



**Ohio House Pension Committee**  
HB 296, Interested Party Written Testimony  
**Dean Marks, City of Elyria Fire Department, President of IAFF Local 474**  
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 Dean Marks, a firefighter from the City of Elyria Fire Department and President of IAFF Local 474.

## **My Story**

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I have been a firefighter for 28 years all with Elyria Fire Department, IAFF Local 474

I started my post high school “career” by attending Bowling Green for 1 yr (pre-med) then left – college wasn’t a good fit for me. The US Army seemed to be calling me. I enlisted in the Army (reserve) 1993-2001 as combat medic, rank of Specialist when I left.

After the Army, I decided to become Firefighter because of the Benefits: pay, healthcare, pension. I had two boys at this time and was working at jobs without benefits or pensions. Those jobs consisted of Plumber, Roofer and then a welder and lathe operator at local factory. I wanted more for my family – a future that provided for my family and me to have a better life.

My father talked me into taking the fire fighter take test based on my previous desire in pre-med and status as combat medic, wanting to help and serve. My father was a Vietnam Vet, he understood the “need to serve” after leaving the service.

### **The Pension Is Main Reason I Am A Firefighter**

The Fire Pension was THE key factor in pursuing this career. I wanted to have a good retirement at the end of career. Continues to play role and as Local President is a major recruiting tool that we tell perspective recruits. It is one of the first things I advocate to new recruits. Firefighting provides a stable job for your family and a pension that permits you to retire with dignity. This career is like no other – when others are running out of a burning building, it’s me going in to help save those trapped inside. The job is dangerous, it’s hard on your body and can be mentally straining. The pension is the thing that keeps us going – knowing I am providing stability for my family.

### **Both Sons Are Firefighters Also**

I love this career. It has given me purpose and the comradery I enjoyed serving in the Army. My two are on the job with me. The bond we have is special, if it wasn’t for the pension stability I needed 22 years ago, I wouldn’t have this. I want this pension to be stable, it has given me peace of mind knowing they will have a pension and the benefits this career comes with.

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