



Ohio House Pension Committee
HB 296, Interested Party Testimony
William Quinn, Secretary/ Treasurer
December 5, 2023

Chairman Mathews, Vice Chair King, Ranking Member Lightbody, and members of the House Pensions Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify as an Interested Party for House Bill 296. My name is Bill Quinn, and I am the Secretary/ Treasurer for Ohio Association of Professional Fire Fighters, and retired St. Patrick's Day in 2016, from Local 20, City of Hamilton Fire Department as the Paramedic Supervisor.

IF YOU WANT TO UNDERSTAND TODAY, YOU HAVE TO SEARCH YESTERDAY

- 1900's** Many individual municipal funds were in existence prior to 1900. In 1902, pension laws for all police and fire funds in Ohio were codified.
- 1939** In 1939 it became mandatory for a municipality employing two or more firefighters to establish a pension fund.
- 1947** The same requirement for police departments became law in 1947. At this time, uniform benefits for both police and fire funds were established by Ohio's General Assembly. Until then, each community set its own rules or formulas on benefits. Also in *1947, a modest state subsidy became available for local police and fire funds requiring financial assistance.*
- 1966** In 1966, Amended House Bill 642 created the Ohio Police and Firemen's Pension and Disability Fund, consolidating 425 individual funds.
- 1967** Operations began on Jan. 1, 1967, assets totalling \$75 million were transferred from these individual funds to OP&F. However, the new pension fund also inherited \$490 million in liabilities.
- Jan. 13, 1967, 19 checks were mailed to retired police officers and firefighters who previously had received their benefits from the city where they had been employed.
- Member contributions to the pension fund were initially 6.0 percent of salary (now 12.25 percent). Employer contributions began at 13.55 percent for police employers and 13.13 percent for fire (now 19.5 percent for police and 24 percent for fire).*
- 1980's** Employee contribution increased, and retirement age lowered
- 2008** In 2008 a severe financial crisis negatively affected OP&F's long-term funding.
- 2012** Ohio Senate Bill 340: Pension Reform Legislation
- Increased Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund (OP&F) employee contributions rates by increments to 12.25% (from 10%) of salary.
 - Increased to age 52 (from 48) the age a member must attain to be eligible for an unreduced retirement pension.
 - For members with less than 15 years of service credit on July 1, 2013, increases to five (from three) the number of years used to determine a member's average annual salary (AAS).
 - Provided for the lesser of a 3% COLA or the increase in the Consumer Price Index.

- Required members electing after July 1, 2013, to participate in DROP to participate for five (rather than three) years to receive the full DROP accrual and specifies how member contributions are to accrue to the participant's benefit. – **Makes fire and police officers work longer.**
- Required employers to remit employer contributions monthly (rather than quarterly). The cities' "float" period was reduced – they only thing asked of them in almost 40 years.

2020

With the help of funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) During the COVID-19 pandemic's recovery efforts, cities and states have been looking for opportunities to address the national rise in violent crime and improve long-term community safety outcomes.

- 10 years of gear funding battles was settled essentially overnight.
- 10 years of upgrading safety and law enforcement equipment settled overnight.

My Story

In 1983, I joined the US Army as a Paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne Division. In 1987, I was honorably discharged as Sgt. Quinn. When I got out of the Army I was working in a factory and taking classes at Miami at night. On my way home from class one night I happened to be the first vehicle blocked by fire trucks rolling up to a house fire. As I sat and watched them work feverishly, with precision and purpose I recalled the scene of my childhood... and something clicked. I saw in the trucks on the street, standing on the ramp of the neighbourhood fire station and the ones giving it all for someone whom they've likely never met, but are having one of the worse days of their lives. I signed up to take the Fire Department test the next day.

When I was offered the job I had to decide whether to leave a good job with good benefits - to take a pay cut for several years but have long term job stability and a secure dignified retirement.