



Ohio House Pension Committee
HB 296, Interested Party Written Testimony
Scott Winkhart, City of Canton Fire Dept, Local 249
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 Scott Winkhart, a firefighter for the City of Canton Fire Dept, Local 249.

My Story

Volunteer Fire Fighter to Professional Fire Fighter

I began in 1996 as a Volunteer Fire Fighter at Bethlehem Twp Fire & Rescue. It wasn't till 1998, that I began my professional career as a Fire Fighter-Paramedic at Perry Twp Fire Dept in 1998. In 2001, I became a Paramedic at City of Canton Fire Dept. Currently, I serve proudly as the Fire Marshal in our Fire Prevention Bureau and am the President of Local 249.

I grew up around the fire service in a small town. As kids we would ride our bikes when the local siren sounded to watch the trucks go to action. One of my childhood best friends was the Fire Chief and we would also visit the station.

Inspired By My Step-Father

Following high school my plan was college for Business/Marketing, but after pursuing this path, I realized I needed more in life. A calling to be more of a community-oriented leader. I didn't realize what this was, but at the time my then step-father was a volunteer at the fire department and encouraged me to give it a shot. The rest is history. I immediately fell in love and found what I was destined to do.

Pension Played A BIG Role For Me In Becoming A Professional Fire Fighter

Pension played a huge role if not the biggest role in deciding to become a professional firefighter. The safety and security of knowing that a pension was available for a career that while rewarding also puts enormous stress and wear and tear on the body. The opportunity to give to this career and know that I could retire and provide for my family comfortably with a pension was/is massive.

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