Testimony on Deferred Retirement Option Program
Joint Committee on Pensions, Investments and Benefits

Presented by
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Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I am Colonel Mark Bruce, Superintendent of the Kansas Highway Patrol. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to provide an update on the Deferred Retirement Option Program.

During the 2015 Legislative Session, the Deferred Retirement Option Program, or DROP, was authorized as a pilot program available to members of the KHP's trooper ranks. The program will sunset on January 1, 2020 absent action by the Legislature.

DROP legislation was pursued to address a dramatic reduction in KHP staffing primarily caused by the impact of a poor applicant pool and retirements. Other states had demonstrated success in slowing the attrition rate of senior members who chose to enter DROP. The same was hoped to be the case in Kansas.

To date, 13 eligible members of the Patrol have entered DROP. Although the numbers are low, they are explainable. As DROP went into effect, so did the Career Progression Plan for troopers. This played a part in increasing the number and quality of our applicants. It also increased the pay of existing members. Consequently, otherwise eligible members have been taking advantage of the CPP to maximize their retirement benefit prior to entering DROP.

We recently surveyed our troopers to gauge interest in DROP and assess when they intended to enroll. 162 responded that they planned to enter DROP within the next 10 years. This represents over a third of the trooper workforce. Maintaining these individuals in their current capacity is of tremendous operational importance to the Patrol.

I would encourage this committee to pursue the permanent establishment of DROP for the KHP during the 2019 Legislative Session. At this time, I am happy to answer questions.

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