

Proponent Testimony for SB 135

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Mr. Chairman and members of the Senate Financial Institutions & Insurance committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to write in support of SB 135 which would add Corrections staff to the KP&F retirement plan.

I have been employed as a Corrections Officer at Lansing Correctional Facility for ten years. I follow in the footsteps of my father who still works there and has for over 30 years. My mother is the Victim Services Liaison there. My wife of ten years works there as a program administrator for the sex offender program. To put it lightly, my family has invested a lot of time, hours, and mental fortitude for the sake of our job. Though each day can present its own trials, we continue to press forward, proud of the service we do for our community. The concept of this community pulses throughout Lansing Correctional Facility. My family is one of many working there, and many generations have come and gone through its walls. With all this being considered, I ask the committee how long you would like to see your loved ones able to enjoy retirement? Ten years? Maybe twenty even? The idea of enjoying retirement is a concept yearned for, much to the same extent as the "American Dream." This "dream" has proven to be difficult for corrections employees when, on average, they are dying 10-to-15 years earlier than the average workforce. The average American has an average life-expectancy of 78 years. For a corrections employee who retires at the age of 60, the average life expectancy is 62 years of age. Our correctional employees are moving on from our service and quickly sliding in to their death beds. To many of us have to watch as our loved ones, our families, our friends and coworkers give their all to our job, and leave far-behind their chance at retirement. KP&F, if to include correctional officers, can open up an opportunity for our employees to exit out earlier with some of their health still intact. It's an opportunity for our employees to retire before the stress and anxiety significantly lower our life expectancy or before some turn to substance abuse or suicide just to end the stressors. KP&F can be an opportunity for loved ones to be able to truly enjoy more time with each other after providing their services to the state.

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In conclusion, I urge you to work SB 135 and pass it favorably out of committee. Thank you for, at a minimum, having a hearing on this subject.

Sincerely,

COI Nathaniel Withers