



OREGON STATE FIRE FIGHTERS COUNCIL

International Association of Fire Fighters
AFL-CIO CLC

January 30, 2024

Senate Committee on Labor and Business
Chair Kathleen Taylor
Vice Chair Daniel Bonham
Committee Members

Madame Chair, Vice Chair and Committee Members,

Good morning and for the record, I'm Karl Koenig President of the Oregon State Fire Fighters Council. We represent over 3800 career fire fighters, paramedics, prevention and wildland professionals across Oregon.

We are here to testify in favor of Senate Bill 588. We understand Senator Meek's Bill and its concept of fixing several challenges in determining a police officers or fire fighters' eligibility for Occupationally related PTSD and PERS Disability Benefits.

Those challenges having to do with the process of obtaining a disability designation from PERS is difficult as compared to the process in the Workers Compensation space as a practical matter. The OSFFC has spent the last several months working with PERS developing amendments to Section 459 of the Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR). We just received encouraging language amendments that streamline and coordinate disability eligibility while not changing the appeal or definitions of the actual disease qualification, description of the law. That process is ongoing and will be completed soon.

Senator Meek has expressed the desire for amendments to the Bill that are not finished and when are completed we will certainly weigh in on them.

We are thankful for the Senators commitment to make these difficult situations easier to navigate for our public safety professionals when faced with career ending occupational diseases such as PTSD.

We ask the committee to continue the discussion on SB 588 and examine the upcoming amendments for applicability and potential adoption.

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I can answer any comments or questions

Regards

Karl Koenig

Karl Koenig

President

Oregon State Fire Fighters Council