

Alaska State Legislature

House of Representatives



Official Business

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SPONSOR STATEMENT FOR CSHB 91 (FIN) **BY: Representative Tom Anderson**

TITLE: An Act relating to medical benefits for retired peace officers after 20 years of credited service.

The state troopers, firefighters, correctional officers, and others known as “peace officers,” employed by the State of Alaska and other local governments are an invaluable resource. These employees risk their health and safety in their service to the citizens of Alaska.

Until 1986, all PERS benefit recipients were eligible to receive major medical insurance benefits after becoming vested in the retirement system. In 1986, the requirements for medical benefits were modified to reduce the number of benefit recipients eligible to receive these benefits. Currently, most PERS participants may receive medical insurance benefits upon “normal retirement,” or 30 years of service. Normal retirement for peace officers is 20 years of service, however statute requires them to work an additional five years to receive their medical benefits. This additional five years undermines the intent of normal retirement and creates a burdensome situation for those employees who work under the most stressful of situations daily maintaining the public’s safety.

CSHB 91(FIN) corrects the existing benefit delay by allowing peace officers to receive their medical benefit at their normal retirement of 20 years. This legislation will end the additional five-year requirement beyond normal retirement.

I urge your support for this important and timely legislation.