

March 14, 2023

***Sent via email**

Chair Ginny Klevorn
House State and Local Government Finance and Policy Committee

Dear Chair Klevorn and Committee Members:

I am writing in support of HF 1234 (Her) that aims to address issues around public safety duty disabilities related to post-traumatic stress disorder. The City of Rochester has experienced, and is expected to continue to experience, substantial rising costs and increasing funding obligations when public safety employees experience a duty disability claim from Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) before a determination from the separate workers compensation system.

As a self-insured city, the Rochester City Council supports efforts by the League of MN Cities (LMC) in seeking legislation that would:

- Provide full state funding for the Public Safety Officer Benefit Account that reimburses employers for providing continued health insurance to police officers and firefighters injured in the line of duty and dependents of those killed (Minn. Stat. § 299A.465);
- Provide opportunities and potentially require employees diagnosed with PTSD to receive treatment for PTSD before a duty disability claim is issued;
- Provide state funding to reimburse local governments for providing paid time off to public safety employees who experience work-related trauma and/or are seeking treatment for a mental injury;
- Funding for initiatives and programs that provide peer support, emotional trauma training, early intervention and mental health treatment;
- Advance wellness for public safety employees as a component of law enforcement reform;
- Provide additional state funding that would provide resources toward recruitment, retention, and training of public safety personnel

Providing additional tools for cities to manage costs related to public safety personnel, PTSD prevention and treatment, and retention of valued public sector workers will provide for safe and effective public services for the community while reducing the rate of cost implications. By encouraging opportunities for PTSD treatment, valued public sector employers that are also community members can have more opportunity to be retained and continue public sector service and employment with local government.

I also serve on the League of MN Cities Insurance Trust Board (LMCIT) and am aware of the impacts that the current system has on a statewide level and the need for additional resources and process improvement related to this issue.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Alison Zelms
City Administrator, City of Rochester (azelms@rochestermn.gov)