

**May 14, 2019**

**Testimony to Joint Ways and Means Capitol Construction**

**No on SB 1049**

**Professional Firefighter Chris Hart**

Good evening, co chairs Holvey and Girod, thank you for allowing me to be here tonight. For the record, my name is Chris Hart and I am a professional firefighter with Tualatin Valley Firefighters. 15 years ago I took an oath and made a promise to the citizens I serve and protect. I have two daughters, ages 9 and 11 and my daughter Olivia is here with me tonight.

Over the last few years we have found ourselves down here in Salem fighting to keep what was promised to us. Today we are here for one simple reason: to ask you to vote no on SB 1049. I am an OPSRP member and under SB 1049, my individual account program will be cut by more than 7%. To me, anything over 0% is a big number.

I know that you are aware of how dangerous firefighting is, and the physical and mental tolls it takes on the women and men in our profession. I love being a firefighter and want to keep doing it as long as possible, but the reality is that cutting benefits to firefighters will force us to work longer than is safe.

I am also concerned about my safety and the safety of my community. Firefighters get paid a living wage and are promised retirement benefits for a reason. It helps recruit people for a high stress and dangerous profession. I want high-quality, experienced people working next to me. If our retirement security is threatened, we'll see more turnover and less qualified people responding on calls.

As a professional firefighter I do everything I can to support my community and uphold the values of public service. When I make a promise, I keep it. All I am asking is that you do the same and not go back on your word to provide a secure retirement.