

From the Desk of Senator

Kathleen Taylor

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## Public Safety Workforce Stabilization Act of 2024

**To:** 82nd Oregon Legislative Assembly

**From:**

American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees  
Service Employees International Union 503  
Oregon State Fire Fighters Council  
Oregon District Attorneys Association  
Oregon State Police Officers Association  
Oregon State Sheriffs Association  
Oregon Coalition of Police and Sheriffs

**RE:** Public Safety Workforce Stabilization Act of 2024

Our coalition comes forward to the 82nd Oregon Legislative Assembly together to address workforce stabilization issues experienced across Oregon in the public safety sector. We believe that with the critical updates outlined in the Public Safety Workforce Stabilization Act, we will not only be able to compensate workers for their service but also ensure that we attract and retain a new wave of talented Oregonians across the state.

**HB 4505-A8 has three updates to PERS categories:**

- **Lowers the retirement age of OPSRP Police & Fire to 55**  
As police officers and firefighters age in these physically demanding roles, their rate of injury, workers comp claims, and other paid leave claims dramatically increases. This is not only an expensive burden on these systems, but it also raises concerns that above the age of 55, the job is increasingly risky for these workers and those they serve. Firefighters and police officers life expectancy is on average at least 10 years less than civilian life expectancy tables.
- **Adds District Attorneys and Oregon State Police Forensic scientists and evidence technicians to the Police & Fire Category**  
In many small and medium size counties the Elected DA serves as the primary DA, while carrying a caseload and operating in a full-time DDA role. This fix applies to 36 Elected DA positions across the State, which is a small number of people serving a critically important role to

Public Safety. Across Oregon, forensic scientists and evidence technicians respond to some of the most gruesome crime scenes imaginable and then must analyze and reassess the horrific details of a crime over and over again throughout the justice process. These traumatic experiences have lasting emotional impacts on this workforce, and it is far past time they be included in the P&F category.

- **Creates a new PERS category for Hazardous Positions**

Workers at the Oregon State Hospital (OSH) and 911 call centers face physically dangerous and/or psychologically stressful job conditions, yet they do not qualify for retirement benefits that would address these inherent and damaging risks. This new category would help 3,200 public safety workers qualify for the improved benefits they deserve at a time of extreme workforce shortages. This new category is delayed until 2030 until PERS completes their modernization projects.

We urge an AYE vote on HB 4045-A8 which seeks to address workforce stabilization issues experienced across Oregon in the public safety sector.