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Testimony on Movement of Juvenile Correctional Officers and Parole Officers
to Corrections KPERS

to

The Joint Committee on Pensions, Investments, and Benefits

By Ray Roberts
Secretary

Kansas Department of Corrections

December 19, 2014

Corrections officers and select non-uniformed staff who work in our adult correctional facilities are members of the Corrections KPERS groups. Corrections KPERS consists of two groups. Group A includes corrections officers and other staff who are responsible for the daily supervision and management of the inmate population. Group B includes maintenance personnel, industries supervisors, and other similar staff who have regular contact with inmates. Like regular KPERS, Corrections KPERS currently consists of two tiers which are based on the member's date of hire. In addition, retirement benefits under Corrections KPERS are calculated in the same manner as regular KPERS. The difference between regular and Corrections KPERS is that Corrections members may retire at age 55 for Group A and age 60 for Group B, so long as the employee has at least three years of service in an eligible position.

Juvenile correctional officers perform essentially the same duties as corrections officers and while the job duties of parole officers differs greatly from that of uniformed staff inside the facility, parole officers generally operate alone in the community and put themselves at risk every day. Despite this, parole and juvenile correctional officers are members of regular KPERS and do not benefit from the ability to retire at an earlier age as their counterparts who work in the adult facilities. Moving these classifications to Corrections KPERS will bring parity to all safety-sensitive positions throughout the Department.

Furthermore, all employees hired after of January 1, 2015, with the exception of those classifications currently covered by Corrections KPERS, will be members of KPERS Tier 3. Those classifications covered by Corrections KPERS will continue to be in Tier 2. As such, newly hired juvenile correctional officers and parole officers will be member of KPERS Tier 3, where an employee's retirement is based on the account balance upon retirement. This change will only further increase the disparity in the retirement plans offered to our front-line staff which may impact recruitment, retention, and employee morale.

Movement of juvenile correctional officers and parole officers to Corrections KPERS would impact 393 employees. Of this, 134 are currently participating in Tier 2. Currently there are 1,918 employees in Corrections KPERS, 745 of which who are in Tier 2. The additional cost in employer contributions is estimated at \$1.9 million from the State General Fund annually.