

Testimony in Support of HB2481

From: Sgt. Robert Ahsens, Olathe Police Department

Date: January 24, 2022

Chairman Johnson and Committee Members:

My name is Robert Ahsens I am currently a Sergeant in the Olathe Police Department. I have been employed by that agency since 2003. I previously served in the Wichita Police Department from 1999 to 2003.

As a younger officer, I learned that it was possible to buy back time from previous employers (such as other law enforcement agencies and the Military) into the KP&F retirement system. When I inquired about doing this, I was told that because the Wichita PD was not in the KP&F system, I would be unable to buy my time back. I resigned myself to losing those (nearly) four years.

As I gained experience and learned from others, I began to think about changing the system so that I, and others, could get credit for legitimate service years outside of the KP&F system.

Last year, I emailed KPERS about this concern. Education/Information Rep. Marais Johnson-Herl promptly replied and informed me that if I was within the KPERS plan a buy back would be possible and that I would be able to use money from my 457 plan to facilitate the purchase. It would be considered a purchase via rollover. However, since I am in the KP&F plan, I wouldn't be able to effectuate this. Additionally, the only way to change service purchase rules would be to appeal to the legislature.

I emailed Rep. Adam Thomas and Sen. Rob Olsen and was referred to KPOA Legislative Liaison Ed Klumpp.

Once the process started, Mr. Klumpp kept in touch with me and I learned that inequities were found in the buy-back statutes governing KPERS and KP&F. Additionally, he assured me that he would work with KPERS to develop this bill to fix the inequities.

This is my first direct experience with any legislative process, and I have been very impressed with process thus far.

I feel that this bill would have positive effects on the careers of many officers who, under current law, would not be able to have credit for previous years of service that their civilian counterparts would under KPERS.

For this reason, I would encourage the committee to advance this bill forward.

Thank you,

Sgt. Robert Ahsens – Olathe Police Department.