



Dear Chair Frenz and members of the Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement:

My name is Katie Marek and I work as an Intensive Supervised Release and Challenge Incarceration Program (ISR/CIP) agent for the Department of Corrections (DOC), writing in my capacity as a MAPE member to ask your to support for HF 1779/ SF 1986.

As an ISR/CIP agent I am responsible for supervising parolees in the community, including those who have committed murders, sex offenses, domestic assaults, and more. ISR/CIP supervision is a 24/7 operation, including nights, weekends and holidays and someone is always on-call. We are not armed, we typically work alone, and much of our work shift must be done before 8:00 am or after 4:30 pm. A typical day entails conducting unannounced home visits, transporting high-risk parolees from prison or taking them into custody (without a cage or handcuffs in our vehicles), issuing warrants, administering drug tests and attending revocation hearings.

Some risks I regularly experience include waiting several hours for police to respond after issuing a warrant or having to take a parolee into custody and transport to jail. I have also confiscated numerous firearms, weapons and pounds of narcotics from residences. A person was shot in a client's yard less than two minutes after I left. I've sat through sex offender treatments where I heard some of the most heinous crimes and process how I can prevent them from reoccurring.

I live with the fact that I believed a parolee was using drugs again and she crashed a car into the median with their three-year-old child in the vehicle, having overdosed on fentanyl the night before I could administer drug test. I conducted numerous home visits alone with a client to later see him on the news having kidnapped and murdered a female who was my age. I am currently supervising an extreme high-risk client for another unit because they assaulted their former ISR agent. And this is just a small fraction of the dangers and stress we face in this job.

Not all parts of being a corrections agent are negative. We help people find employment and housing of their own, often for the first time, enter and complete treatment programs, prep for job interviews, find support networks, fill out college applications, and align them with services to be successful in life and significantly reduces recidivism.

We walk a line between corrections case management and law enforcement duties, both of which are offered retirement at the age of 55. They are rightfully provided these benefits, due to the greater levels of risk, danger and stress in their professions, and the shortened life expectancy due to the damage caused by stress.

Despite the similarities, corrections agents do not have access to comparable benefits. Personally, I would have 49.5 years of service with my department before I am eligible for

retirement and many of my co-workers would have around 40 years in. Being able to retire at 60 years of age or after 35 years of service is a reasonable ask given the work we do.

I ask for your support in passing this bill that will support the health and well-being of all the other heroes known as corrections agents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katie Marek". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Katie Marek