

## Testimony in Support of House Bill No.1419

January 29, 2025

Chairperson Schauer and Members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee:

My name is Tyler Kientopf and currently serve as the Vice President of the North Dakota EMS Association and am the EMS Division Chief for the City of Dickinson, North Dakota. I am writing to express my strong support, as well as the organizations I represent, for House Bill 1419, which aims to amend and reenact sections of the North Dakota Century Code related to the public employees retirement system public safety retirement plan.

House Bill 1419 is a crucial piece of legislation that will ensure the sustainability and fairness of our public safety retirement plan. By updating the definitions and eligibility requirements, this bill will provide much-needed clarity and consistency for our dedicated public safety employees, including emergency medical services (EMS) personnel.

Attracting and retaining qualified individuals in public safety roles is a growing challenge nationwide. North Dakota EMS is not immune to this trend, and we must take proactive measures to ensure that our state remains an attractive place for highly skilled public safety professionals to work. House Bill 1419 helps address this issue by enhancing the retirement benefits for these crucial positions. By offering a more competitive retirement package, we can draw talented individuals to North Dakota and encourage them to build long-term careers within our public safety system.

Investing in our public safety workforce not only improves the quality of services provided to our communities but also ensures that our state remains a safe and secure place to live. High turnover rates and staffing shortages can lead to increased workloads, burnout, and ultimately, compromised public safety. By providing more robust retirement benefits, we can help mitigate these issues, ensuring that our public safety personnel remain dedicated and motivated throughout their careers.

Furthermore, House Bill 1419 will help address the financial challenges facing our retirement system by making necessary adjustments to the plan. This will ultimately benefit all participants and contribute to the long-term stability of the system.

I urge you to support House Bill 1419 and help secure a better future for our public safety employees and the communities they serve. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best Regards,

Tyler Kientopf, BS, NRP, CP-C