



North Dakota House of Representatives

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Minority Leader

COMMITTEES:
Industry, Business and Labor

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Good afternoon, Chair Roers and members of the Senate State and Local Government Committee,

For the record, my name is Josh Boschee and I serve as a Representative from District 44, which comprises downtown and north Fargo.

House Bill 1309 is introduced on behalf of the Bureau of Criminal Investigation, who as most of you know, is our state's law enforcement agency that supports all other law enforcement agencies. BCI agents regularly provide assistance and leadership to our local and county law enforcement agencies. BCI agents play an integral role in investigating fraud, cybercrimes, sexual exploitation of minors and intervening in major illicit drug operations throughout the state.

HB 1309 makes adjustments to the retirement benefits for BCI agents in the following ways:

- Section 1 increases the vesting period to 10 years of service, up from three years of service for current agents
- Section 2 provides a multiplier of three for newly hired agents' first 20 years of service. For any years of service beyond 20 years, the multiplier is reduced to 1.75, which would be in congruence with current agents' multiplier

The goal of these changes is to allow BCI agents to retire closer to the age of 55. You will hear from BCI Director Lonnie Grabowska after me, who can provide more specific information as to why this change is being requested including the reality of balancing the required experience of new agents with the physicality of the job impacting agents who are 55 or older.

We have begun to hear from the League of Cities on behalf of Police Chiefs and the Association of Counties on behalf of Sheriffs that they would like to be a part of the conversation. I would welcome them to be included in the bill, if their members wish.

The Employee Benefits Program Committee, which I currently chair, provided a unanimous favorable recommendation for this legislation this past October. The strong support is based on the need to make sure that BCI has the ability to recruit and retain the best and brightest law enforcement, while ensuring adequate succession planning for agents who are near retirement.

It is my understanding that the Attorney General's office is working with their respective Appropriations subdivision to have the funds necessary for this change to be included in their budget. As you can see in the legislative history, 1309 received strong support from the House Appropriations committee (19-4) before being approved 87-7 by the full House.

Chair Roers and members of the committee, I respectfully ask for your support of HB 1309. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.