



BURLEIGH COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

KELLY LEBEN
SHERIFF

Testimony Prepared for the
Senate State and Local Government Committee

March 6th, 2025

By: Trent Wangen, Major

RE: Supportive Testimony for House Bill 1177- The definition of correctional officer for purposes of the public employees retirement system.

Senate State and Local Government Chair Roers and Committee Members,

My name is Trent Wangen and I currently serve as a Major with the Burleigh County Sheriff's Department. My primary duty is to serve as the Assistant Jail Administrator of the Burleigh Morton Detention Center, a 555 bed facility located in Bismarck.

I am testifying in support of HB1177, the definition of correctional officer for purpose of the public employees retirement system.

Currently correctional officers hired by Burleigh County must be enrolled in the NDPERS Defined Contribution Plan until completion of the required training/certification. After completion of training/certification the correctional officers are then enrolled into the Public Safety Retirement Plan. Normally this training/certification process takes Burleigh County approximately 30 days. North Dakota Correctional Facility Standards require correctional officers to complete the required training within their first year of employment.

Peace Officers and Firefighters are eligible to enroll in the Public Safety Retirement Plan upon being hired and prior to being licensed, certified or trained.

When Burleigh County hires deputy sheriffs and correctional officers at the same time both groups attend approximately 2 weeks of training together. There are several similarities of job duties between correctional officers and deputy sheriffs. While attending the exact same training as classmates correctional officers are currently not eligible to enroll in the Public Safety Retirement Plan until completion of the required training while the deputy sheriffs are eligible upon being hired.

COURTHOUSE

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The proposed amendment would save time for both Burleigh County and NDPERS by eliminating the need to enroll correctional officers into the Defined Contribution Plan to only enroll the correctional officer into the Public Safety Plan at a later time.

I feel correctional officers deserve the same retirement benefits upon hire as other public safety officers receive and ask for a do pass on HB1177.

I will stand for questions.

Sincerely,

Trent Wangen, Major

Burleigh County Sheriff's Department

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