

To: Chairman Holmes

From: Kansas State Firefighters Association

Ref: HB 2263

Good morning Mr. Chairman. My name is Doug Schmitt. I am here as the Northeast Trustee of the Kansas State Firefighters Association. The Kansas State Firefighters Association is an inclusive organization that represent all of the approximately 16,000 firefighters of the State of Kansas, both career and volunteer, chief officer to firefighter.

I am here today to speak in favor of HB 2263. This bill would allow for our most experienced fire service members of the participating career departments in Kansas the ability to stay in the fire service under the KP&F system and continue to serve the citizens of their communities.

All across this state, the fire service is facing an issue of aging members and loss of valuable experience by veteran firefighters leaving. Passage of HB 2263 would be a means by which those communities would be able to possibly retain their veteran firefighters and keep that wealth of knowledge in the fire service and to actively help guide and direct the fire service members who are coming up through the ranks. Members of paid departments many times face the need to retire at a fixed age as they have no benefit for continuing to work later in life.

This bill would allow for a means for them to continue to accrue a benefit while still serving their community. The fire service of today is fast changing and many times newer members need that guidance of the veteran members to help address challenges that may not be as familiar to them as it would be to the veteran members. We would strongly urge you to support this bill as a means for the fire service to avoid the brain drain of veteran firefighters having to leave the service.

I thank you for your time.