



Public Safety Legislative News

Public Safety Employees
Association

June 2004

The Trials and Tribulations of House Bill 91

by Representative Tom Anderson



Representative Tom Anderson

As a freshman legislator, my first term as a public servant has been enlightening. In two legislative sessions I quickly learned that keeping a promise earns loyalty; consistency in political philosophy earns respect; and dedication to a common goal yields devout solidarity. Ironically, I also discovered that even with reliable statistics, persuasive testimony, and impassioned rationale, legislation can be stifled by a minority of legislators in opposition. There lies the reason for the demise of House Bill 91.

When Joe D'Amico, Mike Fox, and other representatives from PSEA solicited my support for an improved medical retirement plan for our peace officers, I jumped at the chance to assist. Sponsoring the legislation was an honor. Working with Joe was particularly encouraging because he afforded a bi-partisan perspective, while maintaining courtesy and an effective style of dialogue leading to numerous co-sponsorships and support. It is primarily because of Joe's leadership and management the Bill moved as far as it did in the process. Mike Fox was the bill expert and technician, who hand-held legislators and staff through the language and amendments, presenting the dynamics of the legislation in committee. His demeanor and thoughtful style garnered additional support as well. PSEA elected officers, as well as Anchorage Fire and Police

Continued on Page 2

Inside this issue:

<i>From Complacency to Political Action</i>	3
<i>Summary Report - HB 91</i>	4,6
<i>Friends and Foes</i>	5,7
<i>Senator Gary Wilken Response</i>	8
<i>Letter from Mike Davidson, IAFF</i>	9
<i>2004 Election Calendar and Absentee Ballot Information</i>	10,11



In the Line of Duty, In the Line of Fire



Trials and Tribulations continued...

Department members, carried the testimonial side of the effort, presenting heartfelt and credible testimony on the merits upon which the Bill should pass to the benefit of Law Enforcement, Corrections and Fire Protection.

While I truly applaud the leadership and members of PSEA for their tireless effort to secure passage of HB 91, my disappointment continues to grow in the face of Corrections and Public Safety Departments suffering morale problems, personnel shortages, and a lack of recognition for the hard work by employees. HB 91 faced its biggest obstacle in a mindset of certain legislators that the State's fiscal woes translate to a freeze on spending. The irony is that HB 91 would have saved money for the State through the offset in higher salaries by retiring peace officers. And don't our Troopers and Correctional Officers and Fire personnel deserve a 20-year retirement? Cost savings + Recruitment Incentives + Fairness in Benefits + Recognition for a Life Threatening Occupation equal a win/win for the state, taxpayers and our peace officers.

I could point fingers at a late-in-the-game Administration, Retirement & Benefits director who consistently failed to be a partner in providing fair and accurate statistics, or a Senate Finance Chairman who requested cost-savings information, Administration support and a majority vote on his committee to hear the Bill, yet at the last hour opted not to give the legislation even a hearing. But the blame game is left to sore losers.

The best approach to take is a positive one. It is my intent to work with our Governor to separate peace officer retirement from the PERS tier system. A Tier 4 looms in the midst of the next Legislature, which will further reduce benefits. PSEA members deserve better. They deserve a Tier I schematic and, given the chance to be voted on before the entire Senate membership in 2005, I believe support will surface as it did resoundingly in the House of Representative this year, thanks to staunch Majority advocates like Representatives Lesil McGuire (Anchorage), Bruce Weyhrauch (Juneau), Jim Holm (Fairbanks) and Carl Gatto (Palmer).

Keep the faith and stay strong in your commitment to restructuring PSEA member retirement. After the election, when the dust settles, a renewed target on the Senate, coupled with a continued partnership with the House, should lead to a victory for Peace Officers statewide. And I'll be there at the finish line to help carry your flag.

God bless you all and thank you for your service to Alaska.

**REPRESENTATIVE TOM ANDERSON: BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
DISTRICT 19 - REPUBLICAN**

Date/Place of Birth: August 4, 1967; Anchorage, Alaska

Occupation: Government affairs consultant

Children: Tim (12), Tommy Jr. (9), Kerry (8)

Residency in Alaska: 35 years - Anchorage

Education: Bartlett High School, 1985, Diploma; University of Alaska Anchorage, 1989, B.A. Political Science; University of Alaska Anchorage, 1989, Masters in Public Administration; Hamline University, 1999, Law Degree (J.D.)

Business and Professional Positions: Anchorage School Board, 2000-2001; Anchorage Zoning Board of Examiners and Appeals, 1999-2001; vice chair, Municipal Light and Power Commission, 1995-1996; board of directors, Anchorage Parking Authority, 1992-1995.

Service Organization(s) Membership: Rotary Club, Elks Club, NAACP, Anchorage Chamber of Commerce, American Society of Public Administrators.

Email: Representative_Tom_Anderson@legis.state.ak.us



From Complacency to Political Activism

As I reviewed the articles that are in the current news letter before you I was filled with a tremendous amount of pride. Not because we were unsuccessful in our first attempt at correcting an unfair retirement system for peace officers & firefighters (HB 91). Because that is not the case, while HB 91 may have died because of a lone Senator's opinion it brought police and firefighters from across the state together in a united front. One that I am sure will remain well in place for the continuation of this issue & the many other issues that affect our members and the residents of Alaska as it pertains to public safety.

I am proud of the accomplishments that (YOU) the membership & our friends have made during this legislative session. You have taken our association from complacency and relative obscurity in the political field to a leadership position in the political arena. This could not have been accomplished with-

out a personal commitment from each of you to be actively involved in the political issues that affect our daily lives but are often overlooked. Stay involved and remain active in the political process; this was just the beginning for our association. Rest up – “Round Two” is just around the corner!



A special thanks of appreciation to all the members who contribute to the PAC fund. Without your contributions, none of this would be possible.

Sincerely,

Jeff Manns

PSEA President & PAC Chairman

House Bill 91 Prime Sponsor

Representative Tom Anderson

Other “yea” votes

Representative Reggie Joule

Representative Beverly Masek

Representative Mike Chenault

Representative Carl Morgan

Representative Carl Moses

Representative Ralph Samuels

Representative Bill Stoltze

Representative Sharon Cissna

Representative Paul Seaton (nay to yea)

Representative Norm Rokeberg (nay to yea)

House Bill 91 Co-Sponsors—by date

Representative Les Gara

Representative Harry Crawford

Representative Max Gruenberg

Representative Nancy Dahlstrom

Representative Bob Lynn

Representative Cheryl Heinze

Representative Jim Holm

Representative Lesil McGuire

Representative Bud Fate

Speaker Pete Kott

Representative Beth Kerttula

Representative Eric Croft

Representative Dan Ogg

Representative Bruce Weyhrauch

Representative Kevin Meyer

Representative Nick Stepovich

Representative John Harris

Representative Peggy Wilson

Representative Ethan Berkowitz

Representative Mary Kapsner

Representative Mike Hawker

Representative Carl Gatto



Summary Report: House Bill 91

This legislative session, PSEA’s objective was to improve retirement benefits for Tier 2 and 3 members. In particular, the goal was to provide those members with a true 20-year retirement, which included medical insurance. We believed that when the Tier 2 system was introduced, the sponsors, former Senators Jim Duncan and Mike Miller, had no understanding of the unique job requirements and stresses of Police Officers, Firefighters and Correctional Officers.

After considerable research and planning, we met with Speaker of the House, Pete Kott (R-Eagle River), in the first week of the session in January 2003. The Speaker supported our Bill and encouraged us to meet with Co-Chair of Finance, Representative John Harris (R-Valdez), and the Chair of Labor and Commerce, Representative Tom Anderson (R-Anchorage). They supported the Bill and Representative Anderson became the prime sponsor. The Bill was read across the floor of the House on February 12, 2003 as HB 91 and was assigned to be heard in the House Labor and Commerce and Finance Committees.

During preparations for hearings, it became known that “any bills with positive fiscal notes would be very tough for the Governor to support”. The Administration announced a neutral position and “officially” remained so until the final days of the most recent legislative session. However, even when asked for by Representative Anderson, no testimony from Department of Public Safety (DPS) or Department of Corrections (DOC) was ever presented, in any hearing. This absence, coupled with consistent negative and often less than accurate testimony from the Department of Administration (DOA), projected a negative position from the Administration throughout the process.

A fiscal note was received just Commerce Committee. The note indicating a 0.18% increase in employer and Commerce went well. Representative Gruenberg, Dahlstrom, Lynn, and moved quickly to the House Finance House Finance Committee, the fiscal note and the COLA section of the Bill proved to be problematic.

No testimony from DPS or DOC was ever presented, in any hearing.

prior to the hearing in the Labor and cated an annual cost of \$1.2 million, re-contributions to PERS. The hearing in Representatives Gara, Crawford, Guttenberg, Heinze signed on as co-sponsors. HB 91 Committee. While preparing for the

The hearing in Finance went as expected, with the merits of the Bill being well received. Co-Chair, Representative Bill Williams (R-Saxman) presided over the hearing and announced that the Bill would not be moving through the Finance Committee. He later told numerous PSEA members that his holding the Bill was at the direction of the “Administration.” This statement seemed to confirm that the Administration was not really “neutral” regarding the Bill. Issues raised at the hearing included the question of support of the larger municipalities. Representative Hawker (R-Anchorage) suggested that Peace Officers should pay the costs associated with the legislation. The Bill remained in Finance, under the control of Representative Williams throughout the remainder of the 2003 session and well into the 2004 session.

The problems at that time were the positive fiscal note, the absence of support from the Administration, Representative Williams, and the City of Anchorage. Those issues were addressed aggressively. When Representative Williams finally allowed the Bill to move, he told us it was due to the Governor’s promise not to veto it. On February 23, 2004, HB 91 finally passed out of committee, with the COLA section removed and with the support of the City of Anchorage. On the floor of the House it passed with a vote of 33 to 3 with the following sponsor and co-sponsors:

REPRESENTATIVE(s) Sponsor: ANDERSON, Co-Sponsors: Gara, Crawford, Guttenberg, Gruenberg, Dahlstrom, Lynn, Heinze, Holm, McGuire, Fate, Kott, Kerttula, Croft, Ogg, Weyhrauch, Meyer,



Friends and Foes—House Bill 91

As the previous article explains, the saga of House Bill 91 was long and challenging. While it was not ultimately successful, PSEA reached a better understanding of who our friends are - as well as those who are not. We also learned that some people mean what they say, while others say only what they want you to hear, or what they think you want to hear. It will be important for PSEA to remember this as the upcoming political campaigns begin in earnest.

We would be remiss not to recognize our friends, especially those who went the extra mile for us. Representative Tom Anderson heads all of these lists. Representative Anderson embraced the idea of a fair retirement plan for police officers and firefighters from the very beginning of this project in early 2003. As the “chair” of the Labor and Commerce Committee, it was natural for him to become the prime sponsor of the Bill. He worked extremely hard and at times against insurmountable odds, but never gave up. Representative Anderson reminds us of a lecture we received from an officer safety instructor who pleaded with us about the need for police officers to never give up. The instructor implored the students to never give up, regardless of how bleak the situation looked. The instructor added that you must try everything and when you run out of things to try, try something else. Working very closely with Representative Anderson gave PSEA leadership and staff members an opportunity to see a man of commitment and character. It was one of the bright spots of this endeavor. We need to remember Representative Tom Anderson in the upcoming elections.

Another friend we must recognize is Mike Fox. Mike took on this project at the onset. While Mike was paid a modest salary for his work on behalf of the PSEA membership, he went above and beyond his responsi-

bility to the organization during the process. Mike lived this effort for two-full legislative sessions and the many months prior to and in-between. Many times this resulted in seven-day work weeks and much lost time with his family. Having Mike on board and living in Juneau was a big advantage for us. We never would have got as far as we did without Mike Fox.

Sam Kito, a legislative lobbyist and his staff volunteered their time and worked on this project for you. Sam was a wealth of knowledge and contacts for us and really helped with the process. Eldon Mulder was retained by the Anchorage Fire Department Employees International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) as their lobbyist on this issue. Eldon worked very closely

Working very closely with Representative Anderson gave PSEA leadership and staff members an opportunity to see a man of commitment and character.

with PSEA staff to try to make this come together also. As a former legislator, Eldon has a great deal of experience with the political process and was extremely generous with his time for PSEA. His knowledge of the legislative process was extremely valuable.

As mentioned, we worked together with the Anchorage Fire Department members (IAFF) on this issue. Mike Davidson and Tom Westcott were the two men who were the “leads” on this project. Throughout the two sessions, the IAFF guys were great to work with and made many trips to Juneau to try to push this Bill through. Mike Davidson all but moved to Juneau and was right there working with us until the bitter end. While not spending as much time as we did with the IAFF representatives, we also worked with the Anchorage Police Department Employ-

ees Association (APDEA) during this process. Mike Couturier, their vice-president, was their lead person on this project. They directed their lobbyist to work on the Bill as well. The three Associations (PSEA, IAFF and APDEA) worked together as a team effort on House Bill 91.

There are a variety of legislators who also pitched in and tried to make this work. We will never know for sure who did what, but here is what we do know. The Bill gained 24 co-sponsors in the House, 23 of which signed on prior to the Bill passing the House. Speaker of the House, Pete Kott (R-Eagle River) helped out during both of the legislative sessions. Speaker Kott was supportive of the Bill from the beginning and provided guidance to us in the process. Upon reaching the floor, the Bill received 33 “yes” votes and 3 “no” votes.

It is important to remember who cast the “no” votes: Representative Vic Kohring, (R-Wasilla), Representative Kelly Wolf (R-Kenai), and House Majority Leader, Representative John Coghill (R-North Pole). Representative Coghill spoke out against the Bill and later lobbied Senator Wilken to kill the Bill. Representative Coghill believes officers and firefighters should work at least 30 years before they can retire. The average age for a new State Trooper Recruit is 34, so you can do the math for yourself.

All the House Democrats voted for the Bill and offered support along the way. Several were co-sponsors as well. Many of the House Republicans continued to help us as the Bill worked its way through the Senate. They personally contacted Senators and urged them to hear and move the Bill. These Representatives also met with PSEA Staff and Officials to help strategize how to better get our message heard. This support was very helpful in allowing the Bill to clear some of the hurdles in the Senate. Those that supported you in this process, that we know of, included Representative Lesil McGuire



Summary Report continued...

Stepovich, Harris, Wilson, Berkowitz, Kapsner, and Hawker. The three negative votes were by Reps. Coghill, Kohring, and Wolf. After the Bill passed, Representative Gatto signed on as a co-sponsor.

In the Senate, the Bill received three committee assignments. The Bill languished in Senator Gary Stevens' Senate State Affairs Committee (STA) until April 2, 2004. During the hearings in STA, the Alaska Municipal League and City of Kenai spoke vehemently in opposition. No support for the Bill was voiced from the Administration, and negative testimony was provided by the Division of Retirement and Benefits. The Bill eventually moved to the next committee based on the "fairness" argument.

It was sent to Labor and Commerce and was under the control of Senator Con Bunde (R-Anchorage) from April 2, 2004 until May 5, 2004. On April 6th PERS reported to the Legislature that they were 28% under-funded. The actions of this committee were very similar to the previous committee with the Administration again choosing to offer no support from DOA, DPS or DOC. As the "chair" of the committee, Sen. Bunde could have killed the Bill, and even though he opposed it, he demonstrated a great deal of integrity to allow the committee process and the votes to move the Bill.

From Labor and Com-

merce, the Bill went to Senate Finance and was then under the control of Senator Wilken (R-Fairbanks). Senator Wilken used the status of PERS as justification for not supporting HB 91 and refused to schedule the Bill for a hearing.

While the Bill was in Senate Finance, we met with the Governor and his Chief of Staff, Jim Clark. The Governor and Mr. Clark took time out of their hectic schedules to accommodate these meetings. There were some negotiations on potential compromises. During one of those meetings,

Senator Wilken killed HB 91 by refusing to grant a hearing before the Legislative Session ended on May 11th.

Mr. Clark asked for a short list of simple points so he could better understand the issues, which Representative Anderson quickly provided. On May 7th, Ms. Melanie Milhorn, Director of the Division of Retirement of Benefits, Department of Administration, wrote and distributed a document that was critical of Representative Anderson's "short list." The document took his short "bullet" statements out of context and responded with essay-style answers, many of which were misinformation or entirely missed his points. This appeared to be an obvious attempt to discredit the legislation, Representative Anderson and PSEA. Unfortunately, this memo was distributed the

document to some of the Senate Finance Committee Members without affording us an opportunity to address the concerns in their letter. Clearly, their "official" position had shifted to negative.

In the final days of the session, through negotiation with Representative Anderson and PSEA, the Administration agreed to support an amended version of the Bill with a lower fiscal note. The changes required that a Peace Officer be at least 50 years of age to receive the benefit after 20 years of service and the effective date was delayed to provide the State time to deal with the PERS under-funding. The amended version was supported by the Administration as well as by four of the seven Senate Finance Committee Members. It would be remiss not to mention that Mr. Mike Tibbles, a member of the Governor's staff, worked very hard in the final days to try to get the Bill heard in Senate Finance. The Governor even met with Senator Wilken and apparently urged him to hear the Bill; however, it was simply too little too late. The damage done by the May 7th memo was such that, even with the Governor's support, we ran out of time.

Senator Wilken, despite writing a letter to Speaker Kott earlier in the week professing to never hold House Bills without a fair hearing, killed HB 91 by refusing to grant a hearing before the legislative session ended on May 11th.



Friends and Foes continued...

(R-Anchorage), Representatives Jim Holm and Nick Stepovich (both R-Fairbanks), and Representative Bruce Weyhrauch (R-Juneau).

In the Senate, it is much more difficult to determine who our friends are. In our initial meeting with Senator Gene Therriault (R-North Pole), he asked PSEA Staff where the Administration was on this Bill and why they had not supplied any written comments on the Bill. That was very hard to explain as we received mixed signals from the Administration until late on May 8. This may have resulted in Senator Therriault's decision to assign the Bill to three Senate committees compared to only 2 House committee assignments. An assignment of two committees would have been considered favorable and four the kiss of death. In any case, the three assignments proved problematic in the end.

Senator John Cowdery (R-Anchorage) was the first majority member to support the Bill. Later, as Senate Rules Chair, Senator Cowdery went so far as to schedule the Bill for a Senate floor vote in anticipation of the Bill moving out of the Finance Committee. Last year, Senator Gary Stevens (R-Kodiak) told us he supported the Bill, but changed his mind this year. As chairman of the State Affairs committee, he held the Bill for a full month and eventually attached an amendment to it, resulting in the State being forced to pay some of the Municipal costs. This amendment made the Bill unpalatable to many other Senators. Senator Bert Stedman (R-Sitka) was initially negative on the Bill, but eventually made a motion to move the Bill on the "fairness" issue. Senator Gretchen Guess (D-Anchorage) and Senator Lyman Hoffman (D-Bethel) also supported the Bill and helped move it from Senate State Affairs to the Labor and Commerce Committee. Senator Guess was strongly supportive of the Bill and seemed frustrated when it was held in the State Affairs Committee.

Senator Con Bunde (R-Anchorage), Chair of the Labor and Commerce Committee, did not support the Bill, and eventually voted against it. Senator Bunde was up front about this and consistent. However, as soon as enough votes (including minority members) were secured in his committee, Senator Bunde moved the Bill to the Finance Committee. This display of integrity was appreciated by those working with the legislature on this Bill. Senator Ralph Seekins (R-Fairbanks) was a key vote that was needed to move the Bill from Senator Bunde's committee. When the chips were down, Senator Seekins was there for the PSEA members. The minority members on the committee, Senators Bettye Davis and Hollis French (both D-Anchorage) also supported the Bill and helped move it. Unlike Senator members' votes in his decision to move the Bill, Senator Bunde considered the minority the Bill.

PSEA must remain politically active and must also play a larger role in supporting our friends in their upcoming elections.

At the end of the day, the key was Senate Finance. As noted, Senator Bunde was opposed to the Bill based on fiscal concerns; however, he was always straightforward and forthright in his objection. Senator Ben Stevens (R-Anchorage) chose not to offer support for the Bill while it was in Senate Finance. The two minority members, Senators Hoffman and Donny Olson (D-Nome) were consistently supportive and pledged to vote for the Bill. The two other votes that were pledged in our favor came from Senator Lyda Green (R-Wasilla) and Senator Fred Dyson (R-Eagle River).

The fate of HB 91 ultimately rested in the hands of Senator Gary Wilken (R-Fairbanks). His original directive was a reduced fiscal note and Administration endorsement. These requirements (set by Senator Wilken to hear the Bill) were met. Our PSEA team, along with Representative Anderson, provided all fiscal information requested, and at a lower cost because of the Governor's compromise. Despite this, Senator Wilken refused to hear the Bill during at least five meetings in the last week of session in Senate Finance. No matter how he colors the demise of HB 91, his refusal to even hear the Bill was the ultimate death blow.

Senator Wilken claimed to be consistent about not moving Bills with fiscal notes; however, he pushed for more than \$90,000,000 in new education spending and a plethora of other spending, but denied our members a hearing on a Bill with a \$700,000 fiscal note. No friend here! He later claimed the Bill came to his hearing too late in the session and the PERS problems hurt the timing of the Bill. What he fails to mention is the Bill's effective date was amended to July of 2008, at the Governor's request, to give the legislature time to deal with the PERS issue. What Senator Wilken also fails to mention is that when PERS was considered over-funded, he helped to withdraw those funds and spend them on non-retirement projects.

PSEA will be determining how best to respond to the situation regarding how this Bill ended, as well as the ongoing problem with your retirement system in the upcoming weeks. Please let your various Board members know your feelings on this issue and what ideas you may have to help bring this concept to a reality. One thing we learned is that we must remain politically active. We must also play a larger role in supporting our friends in their upcoming elections. As a means to accomplish this, PSEA is asking you to please increase your voluntary PAC contributions by an additional \$5/month.

Please help us to better represent you, and let's all remember who our friends are - and who are not.

Please contact the PSEA Office or a PAC representative with any questions or concerns. Thank you.



In the interest of fairness, PSEA has granted the request of Senator Gary Wilken to submit an explanation on his actions regarding House Bill 91 - Following is his response:

House Bill 91

Retired Peace Officer Medical Benefits

The Alaska Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) as well as the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) is broken. This year the legislature was surprised with an unexpected \$96 million invoice to shore up the sagging reserves for these two retirement systems. Next year that invoice will be an additional \$107.8 million and the following year, \$111 million. The employer's contribution rate for the State of Alaska and local municipalities, historically 6-11% of payroll, is projected to soar to 30-40% for the next 25 years.

How we got in this mess is a mystery to me, and to many others. But one thing is certain: given the expense of these systems today, the legislature should be careful and take no action to make it more expensive tomorrow.

It is against this backdrop that House Bill 91, *Retired Peace Officer Medical Benefits*, was considered during the past legislative session. House Bill 91 was referred to the Senate Finance Committee with less than a week to go in the session and was held in committee because it made a bad fiscal situation worse. Was it a good bill? Maybe. Was it a good bill at the wrong time? Absolutely.

House Bill 91 proposed to change the current public safety retirement system for Tier II/III employees. The new proposal provided paid medical coverage for retired state troopers, municipal peace officers, firefighters, and

correctional officers after 20 years of service, if the retiree was at least 50 years old. In order to pay for these benefits, the PERS employer contribution cost for the state, local municipalities, and political subdivisions would need to increase. House Bill 91 increased the PERS accrued liability from a low of \$8 million to a high of \$18.2 million. The necessary annual General Fund cost to the State of Alaska totaled \$1.7 million, rising to over \$6 million per year by FY 2010.

A compromise agreement with a delayed effective date was reached and informally presented to the Senate Finance Committee less than 48 hours before adjournment, but the General Fund fiscal impact was still substantial; over \$777,000 for the first year with an expected 10% increase per year thereafter. Similar added costs would be assumed as well by our local municipalities.

In order to put HB 91 in perspective, it is important to remember that peace officers were recently granted increased retirement benefits in 2001 under HB 242. In contrast to other PERS members, employees classified as *peace officers and firefighters* received the following enhancements in HB 242:

- Greater disability benefits;
- Increased death benefits;
- Three highest years of salary (vs. five highest years) for retirement calculation; and
- Paid health coverage with 25 years of service (vs. 30 years of service).

To suggest the legislature has ignored the service of our public safety officers is to not recognize the passage of HB

242 just three years ago.

Additionally, the legislature heard concerns expressed from several organizations. On March 26, 2004, the Public Employees' Retirement Board, after learning that PERS was under funded by \$2.9 billion, withdrew its earlier support for HB 91 and formally requested that the legislature not pass any legislation that further enhanced existing retirement programs. Also during a legislative hearing, the Alaska Municipal League joined the PERS Board and voiced its strong opposition to HB 91. And on May 10, 2004 the City of Fairbanks passed Resolution No. 4118 opposing HB 91 because of the potential adverse fiscal impact upon the citizens of Fairbanks.

The lack of legislative support for HB 91 was based on well-documented fiscal facts presented to the legislature. In light of the dramatic rise in pension and health care costs to all state retirement systems, plus the stated objections of people directly responsible for the financial stability of the retirement system, and recognizing the prior benefit enhancements awarded to peace officers, firefighters, and others in 2001, the legislature could not, in good conscience, pass HB 91.

Some have chosen to make this legislation a referendum on the value of our public safety and fire protection officers; nothing could be further from the truth. Alaska and its municipalities have a public safety system second to none and one that should make everyone proud. However, the fiscal burden carried by HB 91 led to the legislation's demise and not the lack of appreciation of those who serve us every day keeping our families safe. The expense of this legislation simply could not be heaped upon an already floundering retirement system.



Dear PSEA Membership,

My name is Mike Davidson and I'm a Firefighter and Paramedic with the Anchorage Fire Department. In this letter however I won't be representing the Anchorage Fire Department but instead the Anchorage Fire Firefighters Union, IAFF Local 1264. I had the privilege, along with my comrade Tom Wescott of working alongside your members and employees on House Bill 91. This was lengthy processes that led us to places that I'm sure we would agree we never expected to find. I certainly didn't expect the Governor's office to meet with us, let alone offer to assist us in meetings after their initial cool reception. I also never realized how much effort needs to be put into this kind of project, both in terms of financial and human resources. I know I am more familiar with Juneau than I had ever imagined I might be. In the end, although we didn't see successful passage of House Bill 91, we have raised the public safety employee profiles far above anywhere I ever expected to get. We have been provided audiences with the leadership in Juneau and have proven that we are a political force.



Mike Davidson, IAFF Local

I'd like to recognize several members of your organization. I had great relationships with Jeff Manns, Mo Hughes, and Don Kramer. All of these people were extremely helpful in educating me and furthering the cause. Don and Mo flew all the way to Washington D.C. to attend a last minute meeting with Senator Lisa Murkowski regarding the Law Enforcement Memorial Day Celebrations. Jeff carried the torch as the face of Public Safety in Alaska through the bitter end of the session. Most importantly though I'd like to thank and recognize Mike Fox and Joe D'Amico. Mike poured his heart and soul into this project, sacrificing family commitments and his personal time. He was our strongest proponent and worked tirelessly to further and justify our cause in Juneau. Joe's vision, combined with his ability to see through the forest of many situations, allows him to function on a professional level with the policy makers.

I'm sure there are several others that I was allowed the opportunity to work alongside during this project and I thank them for their efforts. I hope that our two groups can continue to work together in the future on similar projects. Together we'll need to face the challenges in the future to ensure that we continue to provide for ourselves and our families.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Davidson

IAFF Local 1264 Executive Board, Member at Large

House Bill 91 Senate Support

Senator John Cowdery	Senator Gretchen Guess
Senator Ralph Seekins	Senator Lyman Hoffman
Senator Tom Wagoner	Senator Hollis French
Senator Bert Stedman	Senator Bettye Davis
Senator Lyda Green	Senator Donny Olson
Senator Fred Dyson	Senator Kim Elton
Senator Johnny Ellis	Senator Georgianna Lincoln

House Bill 91 Opponents

Senator Gary Wilken
Senator Con Bunde
Senator Ben Stevens
Representative John Coghill
Representative Vic Kohring
Representative Kelly Wolf



2004 ELECTION CALENDAR

(FROM THE ALASKA DIVISION OF ELECTIONS WEBSITE)

July 24, 2004 (Saturday)

Regional Election Offices open for voter registration from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

July 25, 2004 (Sunday)

Final date for citizens to register to vote, update their voter registration and change their party affiliation for the Primary Election.

Regional Election Offices open for voter registration from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

August 24, 2004 (Tuesday)

PRIMARY ELECTION DAY. Polling places open from 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

October 2, 2004 (Saturday)

Regional Election Offices open for voter registration from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

October 3, 2004 (Sunday)

Final date for citizens to register to vote or update their voter registration for the General Election.

Regional Election Offices open for voter registration from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

November 2, 2004 (Tuesday)

GENERAL ELECTION DAY. Polling places open from 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

ABSENTEE VOTING

IN PERSON FOR PRIMARY AND GENERAL ELECTIONS

You may vote absentee in person **15 days** before an election and on election day.

Ballots for **all 40 districts** are available **at all regional elections office buildings**

- **Anchorage**- Dimond Center Mall, #131, near the ice rink by Kay Bee Toys-
- **Fairbanks**- State Office Building, 675 7th Ave., Suite H3- **Juneau**- Mendenhall Mall, 9109 Mendenhall Mall Road, Suite 3
- **Nome**- State Office Building

Ballots for **all 40 districts** are available at the following airports on **Tuesday (Election Day only) from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.:**

- **Anchorage** Ted Stevens International Airport (Domestic Terminal, car rental area)
- **Fairbanks** International Airport (1st floor, by the escalator)
- **Juneau** International Airport
- **Ketchikan** International Airport
- **Kodiak** Airport



Absentee Voting continued...

ABSENTEE VOTING BY FAX

- Voting by fax should be your last alternative to casting your ballot. By using this method to return your voted ballot, you need to be aware that **you are voluntarily waiving your right to a secret ballot.**
 - You must **apply separately** for each election.
 - **Vote** your ballot, have your **signature witnessed** and **fax (or mail)** the ballot according to the instructions.
 - If you are returning your ballot by fax, it must be **voted, witnessed and received by the appropriate fax in the Director's Office by 8:00 p.m. Alaska time** on election day.
-

SPECIAL NEEDS VOTING FOR DISABLED VOTERS

- A qualified voter who is **disabled** may apply for an absentee ballot through a personal representative who can bring the ballot to the voter.
- A personal representative **can be anyone over 18, except** a candidate for office in the election, the voter's employer, an agent of the voter's employer, or an officer or agent of the voter's union.
- Ballots are available **15 days before** the Primary, General or Statewide Special Election at any **Regional Elections Office**:
 - **Anchorage**, Dimond Mall, 522-8683
 - **Fairbanks**, State Office Building, 675 7th Ave., 451-2835
 - **Juneau**, Mendenhall Mall, 9109 Mendenhall Mall Road, Suite 3, 465-3021
 - **Nome**, State Office Building, 443-5285
- Ballots are available **15 days before** the Primary, General or Statewide Special Election from any **Absentee Voting Official**:

All Election/Absentee Ballot information was taken off of the following website:

<http://www.elections.state.ak.us>



Public Safety Employees Association

4300 Boniface Parkway, Suite 116
Anchorage, AK 99504

Phone: 907-337-1979
Fax: 907-337-1753
E-mail: psea@psea.net

We're on the web!
www.psea.net

PSEA Office Staff

Business Manager:	Joe D'Amico
Officer Manager:	Deborah Wilson
Business Agents:	Dennis Ponder Jim Lecrone
General Counsel:	James Gasper
Paralegal:	Scarlett Hebbe
Secretary:	Jennifer Tate
Legislative Liaison:	Mike Fox

Public Safety Employees Association



Proudly Serving Alaskans