



March 7, 2022

Representative Jamie Long  
517 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Joint support for HF XXX (Long)—Public safety related PTSD reform

Dear Representative Long,

Thank you for authoring HF XXX, a bill that addresses a growing issue within public safety, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) duty disabilities. The League of Minnesota Cities, Metro Cities, the Minnesota Association of Small Cities, and the Municipal Legislative Commission support this legislation.

Our organizations recognize the inherent dangers faced by peace officers and firefighters in the line of duty. The duties performed by public safety employees sometimes lead to physical and mental injuries.

In recent years, the number of public safety employees seeking duty disability determinations through the Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) and making workers' compensation claims for line-of-duty injuries has accelerated. This is particularly true in the wake of a law enacted in 2019 that made post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) a presumptive condition for workers' compensation purposes. Cities are concerned about these trends for the following reasons:

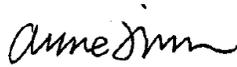
- Every injury that leads to a PERA duty disability retirement and/or workers' compensation claim impacts the employee, the employee's family and the employee's organization.
- The current system for processing and addressing duty disability benefits can be incompatible with the goal of restoring good health and returning employees to work.
- The fiscal impact of the increasing number of claims is unsustainable for employers and, ultimately, taxpayers.
- Public safety agencies, particularly those that are very small and already experiencing recruitment and retention challenges, will not remain viable if they continue to sustain significant personnel losses.

Given these concerns, cities across Minnesota have invested resources into mental and physical injury education, prevention and treatment. According to experts, including those experienced with treating combat veterans, with successful treatment, many injured public safety employees can achieve optimal outcomes of restoring good health for themselves and their families and returning to work.

HF XXX contains provisions that are aimed at taking care of valued public safety employees. It contains important preventive measures that will optimize wellness in public safety agencies. It requires employees with PTSD symptoms to be treated before seeking a permanent duty disability so they can return to the job if possible. The bill does not take benefits away from employees who become injured. Lastly, it funds a state mandate that has become very costly to employers and, thus, taxpayers (the continued health insurance benefit under Minn. Stat. § 299A.465).

Our organizations urge the Legislature to enact this legislation in 2022.

Sincerely,



Anne Finn  
Assistant Intergovernmental Relations  
Director  
League of Minnesota Cities



Cap O'Rourke  
Executive Director  
Minnesota Association of Small Cities



Patricia Nauman  
Executive Director  
Metro Cities



Tom Poul  
Executive Director  
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