Brothers and Sisters,

Understandably, we have received numerous communications from the Membership regarding HD1794/SD1686 An Act relative to providing a COVID-19 retirement credit to essential public-sector workers.

This Legislation was filed approximately a week ago and is still in the infancy stages of the Legislative Process. Currently it has been assigned a Docket Number. Over the next three to six months it will be assigned a Bill Number, assigned to a Committee, and then have a hearing held before that respective Joint Committee.

We recently met virtually with the State Representative who filed the Bill to understand it’s history, express our support, and discuss how we can work together on this Bill throughout the Legislative process. HD1794/SD1686 provides a retirement credit of three years (to be added either to age or years of service) to State and Municipal Employees who were required to work or volunteered to work outside their residence during the COVID State of Emergency from 10 March 2020 to 31 December 2020. This Legislation requires the Secretary of Administration and Finance to identify and notify these Employees of the availability of this credit. It also requires Retirement Boards to make the credit available to eligible Employees. To clarify, the term “political subdivisions” used in the language of the Bill is what covers us as Firefighters to be included under the Legislation. This Legislation as currently written includes all Public Sector Employees form Park Rangers to Firefighters and everyone in between. The language is written so that the three-year retirement credit can be used at any point in one’s career.

To date, House/Senate Leadership, along with PERAC and local Retirement Boards, have not weighed in yet as to their opinion of this Legislation. We are predicting there will be push back from them due to the cost factor if this Legislation passed as written. We will continue advocating on your behalf for the passage of HD1794/SD1686 throughout the Legislative Session as it progresses through the process. To include working with the Sponsors of the Bill, if needed, tailoring the scope of the language to improve the odds of it passing this Legislative Session.

We will make sure to provide updates during the monthly PFFM State Meetings on this and other pieces of important Legislation affecting our Members. Please reach out to your respective State Representatives and Senators asking them to sign on as a cosponsor for this and all our PFFM Priority Legislation.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions. Thank you!

Stay Safe

Paul W. Jacques, Legislative Agent (508) 922-4394 paul.jacques@pffm.org
Craig M. Hardy, Legislative Agent (617) 908-6768 craig@pffm.org
Professional Fire Fighters of Massachusetts (PFFM)