



# Veteran Fire Fighters Association

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA



## St. Paul Police Retirement Association

PO Box 7398, Saint Paul, MN 55107-0398

March 27, 2024

The Honorable Tim Walz, Governor  
130 State Capitol  
75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Walz:

As organizations representing hundreds of retired St. Paul Fire Fighters and St. Paul Police Officers & Survivors, we are writing today jointly to urge your support of HF 4666 and SF 4878, an increase to the retiree Police & Fire Plan COLA and waiting period.

Fifteen years ago, Police & Fire Plan stakeholders agreed to changes to the plan as a "shared sacrifice" suggested by policy makers in an effort to keep our pension strong overall. A 2021 MN LCPR report ranked the Police & Fire Plan at the bottom of all public pension COLA rates. The report indicated a significant reduction in purchasing power over time, which has dropped about 20% for 20-year Police & Fire Plan retirees to date. The 20-year forecast, at 2.5% inflation, is another 20% reduction in purchasing power. The proposed 1/2% COLA increase to match the General Plan is estimated at \$40 million. We know that is a lot of money. But on our end, it amounts to about an average of \$23/month.

The PERA General Plan has operated at a higher COLA than the Police & Fire Plan for years. Also, unlike General Plan retirees, the overwhelming majority of Police & Fire Plan retirees qualify for little to no concurrent Social Security benefits and its added promise of protection from inflation. These factors cause a significant burden on us in comparison. The PERA Board of Directors enthusiastically supports this legislation (9-1 approval vote, 3/14/24) to manage the serious effects of inflation on retired police officers, fire fighters and survivors.

Minnesota Police Officers and Fire Fighters report without hesitation in crisis after crisis; the 2020 riots come to mind. And day to day, we respond to routine calls for service that in a heartbeat can turn deadly; as tragically played out just a few weeks ago. Since 2023 according to the MN BCA, 18 First Responders have been victimized by gunfire. Four of them lost their lives. The number of applicants for a recent Chicago County Deputy vacancy was *less than half that number*.

The financial situation for the state has dramatically improved over the last several years, including significant surpluses. You have many options before you. Please consider the Police & Fire Plan Post Retirement Adjustment Increase to be worthy of law and one of the priorities. Thank you for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Very truly yours and for the Executive Boards,

Timothy Wirth, President  
St. Paul Veteran Fire Fighters Assn.

Brad Jacobsen, Secretary  
St. Paul Police Retirement Assn.