

TESTIMONY – Lt. Raymond J. Curioso

First, I want to thank this committee for considering this bill before you. I want to briefly share with you my story and how the concerns prompting this bill came about.

During September 2004, I was diagnosed with an incurable form of cancer. My first thought at that time was the welfare of my family. I knew I had to live to sign my retirement papers or my wife of 38 years would only get half of my pension. Half would be approximately 42% less than she would receive if I was able to select a full retirement option. As a 33 year veteran officer who loved his work I wasn't ready to retire.

I checked with the state and found I could not make a choice for my beneficiary prior to filing my retirement papers. Suddenly my sense of mortality became real and after discussing the current law with my colleagues this bill came to light. Our families become partners in this occupation that often takes us away from them during important times. They of all people should not be penalized if for any reason we can not sign our retirement papers.

We are hopeful that you will help correct this situation for employees under the MERF system. Thank you very much for your time.