



Please Oppose HB 6662 (AAC Revocation of Pensions of Police Officers Who Commit Any Crime Related to Employment) and HB 6663 (AAC Police Misconduct)

HB 6662 requires that a state or municipality seize the pension or retiree health care benefit of any police officer who pleads nolo contendere or is found guilty of a crime related to his or her service as an officer. A pension is a vested, or earned, property right. It is wholly unfair to make such a seizure. This would be akin to seizing the officer's house or similar personal property. There is already a state law allowing for such a seizure if an officer has committed a financial crime in his or her capacity as an officer. We opposed that law and continue to object to it. This bill would be a far harsher version of what is already a bad law.

This bill makes no allowance for the severity, or lack thereof, of a crime. It appears to allow for a pension seizure for any crime, even if a very minor misdemeanor. A hallmark of our justice system is proportionality – that the punishment should fit the crime. This bill does not do that.

HB 6663 would disallow an officer accused of excessive force from being able to be paid while under suspension. The bill would also require the firing of a police officer convicted of any crime. This would broach due process. Officers have been found to be fully exonerated after being wrongly accused of crimes. This bill would begin punishment prior to a finding of guilt for use of excessive force. Similarly, to the first bill, it would seem to demand firing for conviction of any crime or as a result of any nolo contendere plea, regardless if it is a minor misdemeanor.

Our members condemn any illegal use of force or commission of a crime by an officer. Our members rely on the public trust to do their jobs. But everyone should receive due process and fair treatment under the law.