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**JEFF PITTMAN**

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Chairman Longbine and esteemed colleagues of Senate Financial Institutions & Insurance committee--

Thank you for making the time to have this hearing on SB505. I stand before you as a proponent of a unique idea that has not been proposed. Many times over the past decades, we have proposed options for Corrections Officers to participate in the Kansas Police & Firefighter retirement fund. This is due to many factors including at least 15 years of extreme budget issues. Workers were habitually tasked to work extreme overtime conditions on a skeletal staff, officers didn't receive pay increases for years, and the state was forced to reduce the age limit for officers to 18 just to attract new hires for this challenging, low-pay work. Our state corrections officers perform a valuable function in the justice system. These are demanding jobs that put our employees at risk, put strain on families, and require our workers to go as unsung heroes in a prison system that often operates at or above capacity.

This bill takes advantage of their unique status in the KPERS system. They have already got a carved out plan simply referred to as KPERS Corrections 2 that operates on the basis of salary, years of service and a multiple that Mr. Conroy will review in his testimony. This bill simply ups the multiple a small percentage, from 1.85 to 2.0, with corresponding benefits to our important law enforcement brothers and sisters who have been left behind in the KP&F retirement system.

I have many corrections workers in my district, and they understand the value of having consistency of workforce when it comes to safety and security. They know what it means to be in constant state of awareness as they work with some of the most dangerous criminals in Kansas. They know what it means to get off the job and still be wary for their own safety and that of their families. We have the bandwidth; we need to do this now to help keep our Correction workers in place with this benefit..

This is an innovative way to help without moving these law enforcement officers into the KP&F plan. Some would say it's not enough but I believe it's a step in the right direction. We could afford the one time payment up front to address the \$22 mil liability for ~\$1,800 per year in average benefit, as detailed in Mr. Conroy's testimony.

Senator Jeff Pittman

Leavenworth, KS SD 5