

Stephen Blais
43 Manor Rd.
Cranston, RI 02920

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House Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith St.
Providence, RI 02903

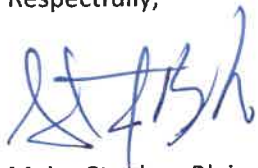
Honorable Members of the House Finance Committee,

I am writing you today in regards to House Bill No. 5767 as a member of the Rhode Island Board of Police Officer's Relief and as a 19-year veteran of the West Warwick Police Department. I respectfully request that you all support the amendment to the Police Officer Relief Act, by striking language which prohibits disabled police officers from attaining gainful employment. As the statute is currently written, disabled Police Officers are prohibited from working, without the prospect of losing tuition assistance.

Policing is a dangerous job and we all know the risk to injury when we submit our applications. However, when a Police Officer suffers a disabling injury that prevents them from continuing their career, their families are affected substantially as well. Disabled Police Officers should be afforded the opportunity to contribute to a working society if their injuries allow, without having to sacrifice other earned benefits which would impact their children.

Finally, this is a request that does not come without precedent. Our brothers in the Fire Department already enjoy this benefit, and rightfully so. I simply ask that Police Officers who find themselves in the unfortunate situation of being too injured to continue their police service, be allowed to provide for their families with a sense of pride and dignity. This is an issue of fairness and a way to honor the service of disabled officers who have given selflessly to our community.

Respectfully,



Major Stephen Blais
West Warwick Police Department
IBPO Local 312