

Chris O'Brien

From: DERRICK SCURRY <dscurryoldschool@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, April 21, 2025 1:32 PM
To: House Finance Committee
Subject: MERS

Christopher O'Brien (Committee Clerk)/(House Finance Committee):

My name is Derrick Scurry. I am a lifelong Rhode Islander and a 25-year employee of the State of Rhode Island, currently serving as a Parole Officer with the Department of Corrections.

I am writing to express my strong support for the inclusion of the Rhode Island Department of Corrections Probation and Parole Officers be included in the Municipal Employees Retirement System (MERS).

Probation and Parole Officers play a vital role in maintaining public safety throughout the State of Rhode Island. Much like police officers and correctional officers, who are already eligible for MERS, We (RI probation & Parole) perform critical public safety functions.

Our duties include transporting individuals upon release from the ACI, background investigations on DOC employees, pre-release investigations on in state ACI releases as well as out of state defendants, provide progress reports to District and Superior Court, supervising probationers and parolees in the community and connecting probationers and parolees with community resources to support their rehabilitation efforts.

These responsibilities demand both physical and emotional resilience. While the work can be deeply rewarding, it also places officers at risk for burnout, stress-related health issues, and early retirement. Despite the similarities in scope and risk to other public safety employees, probation and parole Officers are not currently afforded the same retirement benefits.

Extending MERS eligibility to our department would align Rhode Island with neighboring states like Massachusetts and Connecticut, which already recognize the high-risk nature of probation and parole work. It would also enhance recruitment, retention, and the overall stability of our department for years to come.

I respectfully urge the House Finance Committee to support legislation or budget provisions that would allow Probation and Parole Officers to access MERS.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Derrick Scurry
Parole Officer II
Providence Felony Unit
401-383-7586