



MASSACHUSETTS ORGANIZATION OF STATE ENGINEERS AND SCIENTISTS

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October 31, 2013

The Honorable William N. Brownsberger, Chair
The Honorable Aaron Michlewitz, Chair
Joint Committee on Public Service
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairmen Brownsberger and Michlewitz:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the Committee. On behalf of the 3,400 members of the Massachusetts Organization of State Engineers & Scientists, or MOSES, who come to work with one goal in mind: to ensure the health and safety of our fellow citizens of Massachusetts, I ask that you reject **House Bill 59, An Act Providing Healthcare Benefits Reform** as it is presently written and hold harmless current employees from any proposed changes to retiree healthcare insurance benefits.

MOSES members spend years attaining the professional and educational credentials in science and engineering in order to pursue their chosen careers. While they most certainly have the option to work in the private sector, they chose to pursue a career in public service, at a salary less than their private sector counterparts.

In fact, a good number of my members were actually recruited from the private sector, and while they took a pay cut, they decided that the promise of a fairly priced health insurance plan in retirement would even things out. My members take great pride in their work, they protect our water supply, keep the roads and bridges safe, respond to crime scenes and hazardous chemical spills and even track great white sharks off the coast of Chatham. If House 59 is signed into law, these employees will be forced to pay double for their health insurance while living on a fixed income.

However, many accepted their position with the Commonwealth based on the **total benefits package** that was offered upon hiring. It is important to remember, my engineers and scientists made a career decision for their future and the future of their family based on that package. Changing those benefits now is completely unfair and amounts to a broken promise. At the very least, please grandfather all existing employees... it is the only fair thing to do.

We can't compete with private sector companies that offer higher wages, bonuses, profit sharing and stock options. House Bill 59 will further erode our ability to attract the best and brightest engineers and scientists into state service.

As a taxpayer, I understand that the Commonwealth and the country have faced hard economic times. But, as an engineer for the Department of Environmental Protection and the president of a union that represents state employed scientists and engineers, I feel the need to remind you that we have stepped up to the plate time and again through pension reform, health insurance reform, transportation reform and tremendous salary and contract delays and givebacks. Let me ask you can the state afford to lose these qualified workers?

I urge you to reject House Bill 59 as it is presently written. Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely yours,



Joseph Dorant
President

Massachusetts Organization of State Engineers & Scientists

