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House Standing Committee on Pensions and Benefits
Representative Steven Johnson, Chairperson
Representative Kent Thompson, Vice-Chairperson

Mr. Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today in support of amendment changes to K.S.A. §74-4952, subsection (12), as listed in Senate Bill 228.

The Johnson County Sheriff's Office currently employs a Sheriff's Deputy who has been denied disability benefits by the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System, based on the Deputy being assigned to the Johnson County Sheriff's Office Adult Detention Center. This Deputy has met all the requirements under K.S.A. §74-4952 as a certified law enforcement officer and has successfully completed training from the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center. The Deputy and Johnson County have paid the required amounts for Kansas Police and Firemen's Retirement System coverage.

Deputies in the Johnson County Sheriff's Office Adult Detention Centers are considered to be working "a beat" within the Detention Centers. Daily they are required to interact with the population in the Detention Centers, just as other Sheriff's Office Deputies are required to interact with citizens in public. Within the Detention Centers these Deputies deter and detect crime, handle disturbances, complete associated reports to charge offenders, arrest offenders, and serve warrants and civil process. Many times Deputies assigned to the Detention Centers also assist with assignments outside the facilities, i.e. covering potential overtime shifts in other Divisions, field searches, bomb threats, and natural disasters, which require their certified law enforcement officer training.

The Johnson County Sheriff's Office is not the only Sheriff's Office experiencing these denials by KPERS, which are unfair and contrary to the language and spirit of the statute.

It should be noted that this amendment will have no fiscal impact to the State of Kansas. However, should the statute remain as written, there will be a fiscal impact not only on the budget for the State of Kansas for reimbursement to counties, but there will also be a fiscal impact to the budget of counties.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

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