



Representative Beth Kerttula

Sponsor Statement

**House Bill 184
Benefits for Juvenile Corrections Employees**

House Bill 184 will allow juvenile detention or juvenile correctional institution employees to have the option of converting their credited service under PERS to credited service as a peace officer. To qualify for the peace officer retirement, the juvenile corrections employee must have at least 20 years of credited service.

Under the proposed Committee Substitute for HB 184, if a juvenile corrections employee elects to be treated under the peace officer service, he or she would pay the full actuarial cost of conversion. An indebtedness would be incurred to make up for the lower contribution rate paid by employees and employers under PERS, in comparison with the higher contribution rate paid by employees and their employers under the peace officer retirement system. There will be no additional cost to government for this benefit for juvenile detention and corrections employees.

As a part of their job, employees in the state youth detention and correctional institutions face dangerous situations working with the juvenile residents. Major incident reports document physical assaults on staff in addition to the need to physically restrain youth from doing harm to themselves and other residents. The stressful nature of the work leads to employee burnout.

HB 184 would provide youth facility employees with the option to access the 20-year retirement system provided to other public employees in high risk, potentially life-threatening jobs (i.e., peace officers, adult probation officers, and adult correctional facility employees). Employee retention and recruitment would likely improve with passage of HB 184.