

March 23, 2011

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

My name is Stacy Lear and I am a Detective with the Missoula Police Department. I represent the 612 members of the Montana Police Protective Association.

In August of 2009 I was working a patrol graveyard shift when I responded to a call of a male breaking into a twelve year-old girl's bedroom through the exterior window. When I arrived the male ran from me, starting a sprinting foot pursuit over nearly half a mile, including under railroad cars and over tracks.

The next day I could not walk. I was in the best shape of my life, but my physician later told me that because I was wearing 20 pounds of equipment, it was as if I was overweight and out of shape. I incurred an injury to my left foot and as I stand before you now, 19 months later, I am still in pain. I was lucky, I was able return to full duty after only three months of intensive treatment.

At the time if I had been forced to medically retire, I could not have supported my family. I immediately purchased private disability insurance so I could train for another job should I ever be injured again. That insurance costs \$95.00 per month and will never cover my injured foot.

Young officers are the ones most likely to get injured and have the least financial resources and education with which to survive if they are faced with medical retirement.

In police work, if you do your job to the best of your ability, you are going to get hurt.

There's no way to chase down the man who is breaking into a little girl's bedroom and do it safely.

There's no way to drive a car at 120 miles an hour and do it safely.

There's no way to stop a man twice your size from strangling his wife to death and do it safely.

I urge you to oppose HB334. In the alternative, I beg you to consider amending it to include an exception for public safety workers.

Sincerely,



Detective Stacy Lear

Missoula Police Department