

SHERROD BROWN
OHIO

COMMITTEES:
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION,
AND FORESTRY
BANKING, HOUSING,
AND URBAN AFFAIRS
FINANCE
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510 - 3505

Dear Colleague

I invite you to join me in supporting the *Expanding Health Care Options for Early Retirees Act* (S. 2236), a bill to provide access to a public health insurance option for public safety retirees.

Health care costs continue to rise at a rate significantly higher than inflation, making it harder and harder for older Americans to afford health insurance. While the Affordable Care Act (ACA) made significant progress toward universal coverage by providing tax credits to help 1.4 million previously uninsured adults between 50-64 get covered, there are still millions without health insurance and millions more burdened with high costs or limited options.

One specific population that faces significant challenges when it comes to accessing affordable, comprehensive coverage is public safety retirees. Fire fighters, emergency medical services (EMS) personnel, and police officers often work in dangerous and demanding conditions, which can take a toll on their physical and mental health. As a result, many public safety officers are forced to retire early because of service-related disability or injury. This population also faced unique health challenges, including greater prevalence of chronic conditions like cancer, and a higher likelihood of acute conditions such as heart attack and stroke, and associated high costs.

The *Expanding Health Care Options for Early Retirees Act* (S. 2236) would allow first responders who are separated from service as a result of retirement or disability to buy into a public option similar to the Medicare benefit. This legislation to provide a better, more affordable option to early retirees who spent their careers serving the public is endorsed by the Fraternal Order of Police, the International Association of Fire Fighters, the International Union of Police Associations, the National Association of Police Organizations, the National Conference on Public Employee Retirement Systems, and the National Troopers Coalition.

By successfully expanding Medicare, we can continue to increase coverage and lower costs for all Americans. If you are interested in learning more about S. 2236 or becoming a cosponsor, please reach out to Abigail Duggan of my staff (Abigail_Duggan@brown.senate.gov).

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator