

From: [Brent B](#)
To: [Lisa Diesslin](#)
Subject: Written Testimony for March 6 - Agenda Item #6
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March 6, 2023

Honorable Chair Representative Her and Pension Committee Members,

Legislators, the TRA board, and Governor Walz have heard loud and clear that there is a need for Tier II pension reform. Today's social media, technology, mental health issues, and COVID have made teaching some of the most challenging years in our history. Teaching our youth 44 years in today's climate to receive a full pension is not competitive with our neighbors and is a disservice to our students. It also takes away from our substitute teacher pool as many 57-65-year-old retirees will substitute teach a few days a week. Having active teachers sub during their prep time is creating further burnout. Demonstration of this occurred in real-time when this age group didn't substitute as much with fears of COVID. Senator Julie Rosen, the former chair of the pension committee in the 2022 omnibus bill hearing, said she couldn't imagine sitting on the floor at age 65 teaching kindergarten.

The SF2222 (Wolgamott) and HF1938 (Frentz) bills stating 62 years of age OR 35 years of service will make the system whole and just. The 35 years of service is a little longer than the Rule of 90, but factors in an increased life expectancy. Age 62 works well for educators who started later in their careers or took leaves. The number of years taught will be calculated in the formula to make this fair for all. This bill affects most educators and offers a personal choice rather than holding them hostage until age 66.

The state has chronically underfunded educators' pensions for several decades, not to mention the salary freeze years. Educators sacrificed for Minnesota during these years. The pension fund is in good shape. This legislative session is the time to get it done. The Rule of 90 is sunseting this year for most, so it makes sense to take action in this legislative session. Please don't push it off until next year, or it will be the same excuse for it not being a budgetary year. The 2023 legislative session is the year to get it done. Many of us started college in 1985-88 with the promise of a Rule of 90 pension like our parents, only to graduate with that taken away. Many teachers are generational. Both my parents were, and my sister is currently a high school teacher. Minnesota must attract and retain quality educators to keep competitive with our neighbors. Employer contributions have been 46/47th in the nation. We need to keep Minnesota a quality education state. 62 OR 35 will attract and retain teachers. If nothing gets done this legislative session, many teachers of all ages have vowed to leave the field. I would hate to see the quality of education diminish. We have been a quality education state for many

decades. It's time to take care of educators.

On behalf of the 14,600+ members on the pension reform Facebook page and over 26,000 signatures on our petition, please support the 62 OR 35 bill. Educators in Minnesota deserve better. A well-educated state is a quality state. Many of you wouldn't be where you are today without a quality education.

Thank you for allowing my written testimony. I appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Brent Bovitz

Minnesota Public Educator, Year 34 in Education

Eden Prairie