

From: [Chuck Carlson](#)
To: [Lisa Diesslin](#)
Subject: Education Pension Reform - Testimony
Date: Friday, March 3, 2023 12:05:34 PM

Members of LCPR,

Thank you for addressing the critical issue of teacher pension reform.

As a teacher who is 53 years old and in year 31 of teaching in Minnesota, I can verify that teachers have a shelf life of effectiveness, patience and physical ability to deliver the energy needed to effectively manage a classroom and inspire greatness in our students.

During my 31 year career as a band director, I had the privilege of starting my teaching career working with high school bands, pep bands, jazz bands and marching bands. For the past 20 years I have been teaching middle school bands and jazz bands in Brainerd, Minnesota with huge numbers of students. The result is that I am losing my hearing. The damage is done and my hearing is now in serious decline. I do not feel that I should have to sacrifice all of my hearing during my teaching career. I would love to have retirement years being able to hear my grandchildren's voices and those of my loved ones. Unfortunately I am not financially able to retire early because the penalties are too great under our current Tier II system. Under our current retirement options, I would have to teach another 13 years to reach full retirement. I simply can not do that and disability income is not enough to cover those years.

35 years is a full career as a teacher. Please allow us to retire while we are still at the top of our game and effective with students. 44 years of teaching is unimaginable (that is how many years I will need to teach to reach full retirement age of 66). In my personal case, please allow me to retire with some of my hearing ability by supporting 62 OR 35 as well as credit for covid years! Minnesota has failed to adequately fund pensions for years and the change from Tier I to Tier II is completely unfair. Now is the time to correct this issue.

Regarding the teacher shortage: Teachers used to be, and could be, the greatest recruiters for future teachers in Minnesota. With today's retirement penalties, there is no way teachers are recommending teaching in Minnesota to our students. Treat teachers fairly by passing 62 OR 35 and you will see many teachers resume the tradition of recommending teaching to our best and brightest students!

Thank you,
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