

From: [G5](#)
To: [Lisa Diesslin](#)
Date: Thursday, March 2, 2023 11:22:37 PM

Dear Members of LCPR:

I would like to thank you for your service. I imagine you have fielded many emails and phone calls recently from teachers all over the state. I am writing to share my story, in hopes that you will realize how important your decisions are to all of us.

I am 52 and began teaching right after college. I was proud to be a career teacher and feel like I dedicated my life to my job, In retrospect, this dedication was often at the expense of my own family and health. When I think of the pension and see that the normal retirement age is 66, I feel dejected. I think about what I might have done differently in my life. I missed some important moments in my own childrens' lives due to spending my days in my school. I envisioned when I retired in my late 50's, I could be there for grandchildren, but with the current system that is a long way off for me.

The past few years in public schools we have witnessed an increase in violence toward teachers, lack of parental support and unrealistic initiative expectations. Teachers my age cannot imagine working another 14 years in these conditions. When the Rule of 90 was eliminated, we always assumed things would be equitable when we reached the end of our careers. If I teach until age 66, putting 44 years in, it would be considered the Rule of 108! I am afraid I won't have the physical stamina or mental toughness to withstand the pressures of the job. This is unacceptable and I am hopeful that this year we can rectify this situation.

Please consider the proposal to lower the retirement age without penalty. Please vote to allow us to choose to end our careers while we are at the top of our game. Please allow us to retire at an age where we will consider giving back to the communities we served for over 3 decades.

I imagine the majority of letters you are receiving are from teachers around my age. You may not be hearing the stories of the younger teachers, but I recently realized that they are just as concerned as we are. When they hear us "seasoned" teachers speak of our retirement worries, they respond "I cannot imagine doing this for another 35 years." Many of these exceptional young educators are taking leaves and resigning after only a few years. I wish I could encourage them to stick with it, however, I know in my heart that they are making the right choice.

Thank you for reading my letter and thanks in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

Wendy Graves, District 270