

I am writing concerning the state of Tier II retirement in Minnesota

Please look for the 60/30 proposal bill to be presented to the Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement as per the TRA meeting many of us attended on January 18, 2023. TRA voted through a majority vote to propose a retirement plan for teachers of 60 years old and 30 years of service.

1) I am originally from eastern Wisconsin and currently live on the border of Minnesota and Wisconsin. After Wisconsin's education took a turn under Scott Walker's leadership I knew when I earned my teaching degree I wanted to teach in Minnesota for logistical reasons and for their well respected value on education. As a newer teacher, I now question my decision to become a teacher and it is not because I don't love teaching. It is because I cannot envision myself still meeting the needs of students and balancing my own lifestyle over 40 years from now. The career is no longer sustainable in my eyes, especially if we want our teachers to be meeting all of the demands on a satisfactory level. Many teachers in Wisconsin are leaving the profession due to this reason, and if Minnesota doesn't change the retirement policies we will have a tragic teacher shortage resulting in poor education and a hurting society.

2). Again, as a newer teacher in my second career at age 28, I was often asked during my graduate teaching license program why I would want to go into teaching. I was always shocked by how many people, teachers and non-teachers, would discourage me from this career. I was warned the pay will never add up to the hours of work put in, the type of work is a recipe for burnout, and the retirement age speaks for itself. If it weren't for my passion to work with children and help them learn and grow as humans, I would easily have chosen a different path. I only hope my current passion lasts the next 40+ years, especially if the devaluing trends for educators and education continues.

3) The majority of the issues facing the future of education could EASILY be solved by addressing the teacher retirement issue. It is time politics and education stop mixing, and we SHOW value again towards our education system. It is the basis for a thriving society and country, and without it the negative consequences are detrimental and irreversible. It is quite simple. When teachers are recognized for their essential and resilient work through pay, retirement benefits, and opportunities, teachers will not only be retained better, but they will do better.

As most educators chose this profession under the Rule of 90, revoking this would only be another example of devaluing what education means in our state. Historically, teachers have unrightfully accepted low pay believing that in the end we would receive a just pension as precedent has always conveyed in our state and those around us, which is not the case anymore. We will continue to hold onto faith that Minnesota joins the states around us and makes good on precedent.

Please, please consider restoring teacher pension back or at least close to the way it was when we made the choice to dedicate our lives to education. Show our youth and potential educators that education and educators are valued. Please consider TRA's proposal of 60/30 and Education Minnesota's proposal for the Rule of 90. Thank you for your time and energy in improving retirement and investing in recruitment and retention for Minnesota teachers.

Hadley Mooney, 5th grade teacher, Winterquist Elementary School