

Testimony in support of SF1938/HF2222

March 6th, 2023

Dear LCPR Member:

My name is Amy Randall and as a 24-year "seasoned teacher" in Minnesota, I was pleased to see the 62 years old or 35 years service proposal introduced recently for our lawmakers to consider. This change will not only bring our retirement benefits in line with surrounding states, but it will also serve as a way to attract young people into the profession and possibly encourage those who have left teaching to return. 62 years old or 35 years of service is a vast improvement that will bring our retirement more in line with the rest of the country and neighboring states.

The shortage of educators and other school staff is a serious issue. It is essential we provide competitive compensation packages to attract the best educators to the profession and keep them in our schools. Offering pensions that recognize and reward educators hard work is the best way to do this. Teaching is a rewarding but extremely exhausting career. At the age of 46 I can not imagine teaching another 20 years to get to the current retirement age of 66. Recently, there have been additional pressures beyond staff shortages including Covid, and student mental health which have been especially challenging.

As educators we deserve a fair and equitable retirement. With the budget surplus now is the time to make this change. As it currently stands, my husband who is the same age as me and started his career at the same age/time will retire from his police officer career 11 years before me with a fully funded pension. Teachers do not need to be seen as martyrs or heroes. Instead, we need to be treated with respect and allowed to retire equitably.

Please support and pass SF1938/HF2222, 62 or 35, which would bring the much needed pension reform to MN Tier 2 teachers. Show the educators of this state that you understand the high demands of our jobs and the unfairness of the tiered teacher retirement system that is currently in place. With the State's current surplus we know that you have the ability to make this reform a reality!

Thank you for your consideration, support, and movement on passing meaningful teacher pension reform to attract and retain teachers in Minnesota this legislative session.

Amy Randall
6th Grade Teacher/Union Secretary
North Branch Area Middle School