

From: [Belinda Stutzman](#)
To: [Lisa Diesslin](#)
Subject: Benefit Improvement for Teachers
Date: Thursday, March 2, 2023 3:09:31 PM

Good Afternoon,

I am writing to you asking to include my written testimony to the LCPR ahead of the March 6 Pension Committee Meeting. As a career Minnesota teacher, I am hoping that you will support benefit improvement for teachers and address the inequities between Tier 1 and Tier 2 teachers in the state of Minnesota.

For the past **35 years**, I have been a proud teacher in this state. I was born, raised and educated in the state of Indiana, but followed my husband here to support his career. I was hired in May of 1989, but did not start teaching until August of 1989, therefore, I do not fall under the Rule of 90. I have truly enjoyed my career and have truly given everything I have to education in this state. Had I been able to retire under the Rule of 90, this would be my year to retire. Unfortunately, I have to hang in there another **TEN** years to be able to leave the profession with full benefits. I have aging parents in Indiana that I need to tend to, but I can not because I can not afford to lose out on a full pension package. I should also note that had I dedicated my career to my home state, I would have been able to retire years ago with full benefits because they have a Rule of 85.

I don't understand how a state such as Minnesota can treat current teachers so poorly. We are held hostage by political parties who are in control and the current party is the one we have stood so strongly behind. We were beat up and battered during Covid and many of us were even left out of the "Hero Pay" because we didn't fall within the income guidelines. Those that did receive a very small stipend for the years of educational mayhem we endured.

We are not asking for anything crazy. We are asking for a reduction in the NRA, reduced penalties for early retirement, and to be treated equitably to our Tier 1 colleagues. We are asking that the state adequately funds our pension program as it has been drastically underfunded in the past. We are asking to be treated with dignity so that the next generation of teachers feel compelled to come to Minnesota and teach for a lifetime like I have. We are asking that our female dominated profession is brought closer to parity to male dominated careers.

If you truly want to invest in education, start investing in teachers. Quality education begins with quality teaching. Minnesota teachers have continued to answer the constant calls of society and the legislature. It is time that they stand with us.

Thank you so much for your time.

Belinda Stutzman
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