

**From:** [Kathleen Thompson](#)  
**To:** [Lisa Diesslin](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony Pension Commission Meeting March 6,2023  
**Date:** Friday, March 3, 2023 11:31:42 AM

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## Agenda item #5 - Public Testimony

Good Morning,

My name is Kathleen Thompson and I am writing in support of Tier II pension reform for Minnesota teachers. I have taught special education for 35 years and have felt that my contribution to the lives of countless children has been, and continues to be valuable. I did not qualify for the Rule of 90 because I was a part-time non public special education teacher for my first year and then was a long-call sub for two years while I worked on additional certifications. I was not part of the pension plan during this time – I am not sure if it was available to me or not or if I had to opt in to it. Either way, my “official” TRA date is 1990. There are many reasons why I feel that reform is needed. First, it is a fairness issue. Other states around us, as well as other states in the country, have pension plans that allow teachers to retire around 60 years of age with full benefits. In Minnesota teachers have to work until 66 years of age to enjoy the same benefits. This issue has been lingering since 1989 and has not been addressed, despite promises that it would be. I believe that this issue is gaining importance as the teachers who were affected by this change are now getting to the age where retirement is becoming an issue. Second, although I am only 58 years old, I feel myself wearing down both physically and mentally. As a two-time cancer survivor, I have lingering physical issues due to my cancer treatments that will be with me for the rest of my life. Students are becoming more challenging and paperwork demands are constantly increasing – things are very different from when I began teaching in 1987. Third, I believe that getting new blood into the profession is a good thing. I work mostly with teachers who are young enough to be my children. I see them bring enthusiasm, energy, and new ideas into school as well as the technology skills to deal with this generation of learners. I do not feel like teachers are asking for special treatment, only what is fair and equitable based on other states and other professions. Thank you for considering my position.

Respectfully,

Kathleen Thompson