

From: [Victoria Wright](#)
To: [Lisa Diesslin](#)
Subject: EDUCATION PENSION REFORM - TESTIMONY
Date: Friday, March 3, 2023 2:58:22 PM

EDUCATION PENSION REFORM - TESTIMONY

to lisa.diesslin

Greetings ~

Please support HF2222 (Wolgamott); SF1938 (Frentz) to improve the currently abysmal pension that educators in the state of Minnesota are facing and address the looming crisis in education.

If the pandemic taught us anything at all, it is the absolutely **crucial** role that schools play in a functional economy and society. Without schools, families must take time off from work - which negatively impacts nearly every aspect of daily life as we know it. Every one of us has experienced and witnessed this over the past several years. We **must** bolster our schools and our teachers immediately.

As an educator, I have been watching teachers leave the profession at an alarming rate. I teach in a pathway program where we off juniors and seniors the opportunity to experience life as a teacher. These young, excited, future teachers are seeing firsthand the extreme challenges facing educators. Additionally, I teach with a 20-year veteran teacher who cannot afford to get his credits to advance his salary because he can't afford it. I, personally, have been teaching for 29 years but because I have moved states now at 58 look at another 10 years to receive my pension and another four to even consider retirement. As a cancer survivor, I have looked my immortality in the eye.

Currently, there is very little enticement to join our ranks, and very little enticement to stay. This job is hard. We love our kids, but the politicization of schools has created an environment that puts educators on the defensive at every juncture. This, in combination with very real safety concerns, low pay, little respect, increasing workloads, and now pensions that require teachers to work a decade longer than those who retired last year, is prompting far too many to hang it up and find work in the private sector. I'm seeing teachers who are in their 20s, 30s, and 40s leaving the profession, and I'm seeing an alarming shortage of new recruits. As a former department chair in one of Minnesota's largest high schools, I've seen shifts in potential teacher candidates over the years, but never like this. We are at a precipice here. This is not a drill.

Please do your part and vote for the above bills in order to recruit and retain quality educators here in the great state of Minnesota!

Sincerely,
Victoria Wright
Prior Lake