

Written testimony in support of SF3162/HF3100 Educator Pension Reform being discussed as part of the Pension Omnibus Finance Bill (TRA)

March 26, 2023

Dear LCPR Committee members,

My name is Diane Solberg and I have been a teacher in the North Branch Area Public Schools for 31 years. I am counting on this committee, the governor and all current Minnesota legislators to fix the wrong done to future teachers on July 1, 1989 when the two tiered pension system was created. The teachers of this state need and deserve meaningful educator pension reform.

I will continue to do my best to educate students in this state regardless of if this reform happens. That is what we career teachers do, we continue on through pay freezes, large class sizes, new standards and testing, COVID, school violence and students needing more support than ever before. What I CANNOT do, is encourage others to enter this profession where wages, benefits and retirement have continued to deteriorate throughout my career.

Both of my children expressed interest in following in my footsteps as an educator. With a heavy heart I encouraged them to pursue other career paths and now they are college graduates making more money than I do, just a few years out of school. They could not afford to be teachers in Minnesota but they had the passion to do so! I am proud to see them both coach at our High School but we needed them in our classrooms.

I wonder how many teachers have had this same difficult conversation with their kids and with students who ask about the profession? Wouldn't it be nice if all Minnesota educators could send a positive message about joining their profession? We need strong teachers in the classroom, it is a difficult job that is only getting harder.

Please support and pass SF3162 / HF3100, 60 years of age and 30 years of service, which would bring at least some of the much needed pension reform to Minnesota Tier II 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 action on passing meaningful teacher pension reform to attract and retain teachers in Minnesota this legislative session.

Diane Solberg
North Branch ISD138
Proud Teacher for 31+ years