

From: [Karl Kaufmann](#)
To: [Lisa Diesslin](#)
Subject: LCPR Testimony
Date: Sunday, March 26, 2023 7:48:20 PM

Dear Committee Members,

I implore you to include Tier 2 teachers who chose to retire during the Pandemic for health reasons into Pension Reform by adjusting our severely penalized pension amounts to be adjusted to agreed upon reform levels. This consideration was completely ignored during the height of Covid. Please consider my story as an example.

I led about as a successful teaching career as any educator could imagine. I retired at age 60 AND 30 years of dedicated service.

For my efforts, I was penalized with a 42% reduction in my pension and no COLAs until age 66. Even though it was mandatory that I contribute the same amounts or more into the pension fund, AND I fulfilled the same exact service time requirements as my Tier 1 colleagues, I received HALF their pension amount. That puts my pension amount not far above Federal Poverty Levels for a career educator. How is that reasonable by anyone's standards?

There were NO retirement considerations for aging Tier 2 career educators who had comorbidities during the Covid pandemic. None. Zero. Just an increased workload and elevated health risks.

Teachers like myself, who had developed non ischemic cardiomyopathy were faced with: lose half our EARNED pensions...or seriously risk your health. I chose to retire spring of 2021 rather than go into a third year of Covid teaching. The prospects of face to face instruction with the CDC and MN Health Dept safety recommendations being abandoned was less than appealing.

Those like myself who suffered the ultra severe pension penalties are now left out of any reform language and efforts.

This is just wrong. So very very wrong on so many levels. It is exactly a story like mine that illustrates so clearly the massive inequity in our system and the need for reform.

NOT including and amending Tier 2 instructor's who've suffered this inequality by allowing adjusting their pension to whatever new penalty levels result from reform would be unconscionable. Adjust our pensions, we've EARNED more than these drastic penalties provide.

As the session proceeds, I urge you to do the right thing and include currently retired Tier 2 teachers in reform. We've EARNED it. We've PAID for it. Include us! Career educators should not be penalized into poverty. Policy makers should be the first to recognize the only sure outcome from failure to do the right thing, is to create a bigger problem in the future.

Minnesota should be better than that kind of legacy.

Respectfully submitted,

Karl Kaufmann

Former:
Teacher of the Year Semi-finalist
MAEE Environmental Educator of the Year
MFI MN Forest Educator of the Year
U of M Outstanding Science Educator Award
Sourcewell Educator of Excellence