

From: [Steven Bliven](#)
To: [Lisa Diesslin](#)
Subject: Submitted testimony, Feb. 12, 2024, LCPR meeting
Date: Wednesday, February 7, 2024 5:58:55 PM

Dear LCPR Committee:

A year later, I'm revisiting one of the many letters I have sent. First of all, I would like to thank you for being a servant leader; your position is to help decide what is the **right** road to choose to benefit those you represent. As an elementary teacher, I concur with this mindset by wanting what is best for my students and the school community. Educators by nature want to serve with their heart and soul putting others first. This is sometimes our worst virtue, because we forget to take care of ourselves and often trust others to make the right decisions for our well-being. With this long introduction, I am disheartened that Minnesota ranks as one of the worst pension plans in the country for Tier II teachers (hired after 1989). I was also **shocked** that with the huge surplus last year that an NRA of 65 was passed and **NOT** to start until the summer of 2025? That was just one more knife for the educators who were already in their 60s (making them wait an additional 2 years).

I graduated in business and became successful in my first career. However, my wife and I talked long and hard about earning a Masters in elementary education. We knew I would take over a 60% cut in pay and work twice the amount of hours. However, I felt called to the profession and knew I could make a difference. Despite the drastic reduction of income, I took solace in the fact that teachers in Minnesota **had** a great retirement. I have loved my teaching profession, the growth in my scholars, and have had an abundant amount of blessings that my cup truly runneth over.

Please do unbiased research (other than from people who already have a better pension than Tier II educators), ask questions and do what is right so that our pension is not an embarrassment (kick-in-the-face). I received a message from my nephew and niece, both current educators elsewhere who told me they would never want to be a teacher in Minnesota. They can't imagine needing to teach for 45 years to reach the 65 year requirement for a full pension without penalties. On Facebook, *Pension Reform for Tier II Minnesota Teachers* has been growing to over 19,000 members and continuing. Forgive me for assuming that my retirement would be equitable - my bad. I would love to retire without a bitter taste in my mouth, but rather as a celebration to a new beginning where I can give back in a new and different way. Please look at reducing the high penalties sooner than later which would help **all** educators and please have a career rule with **no penalties** after 30 years of teaching and 62 years of age. We want the best and the brightest to want to teach in Minnesota rather than our surrounding states who offer better options.

Thank you for your consideration,

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