

April 25, 2024

Public Testimony Related to Item 6: Projects and work groups for the 2024-2025 legislative interim.

Dear Chair Her and Esteemed LCPR Members:

My name is Maggie Temple and I'm a thirty-year veteran teacher in the Twin Cities. You've received communications from me before; This year, I've written numerous testimonies and emails to the committee related to pension reform. Last fall, I even drove three hours to Duluth to testify in front of you and give you my experience with our broken Tier II educator pension system.

I understand the committee does not make the laws, but you do have influence. Minnesota teachers need a pension system similar to those in surrounding states. We need a reduction in penalties and a career rule. We need to re-establish deferred augmentation as well. Without an attractive pension, Minnesota districts will have a difficult time attracting and retaining new educators.

Please consider spending some time this summer looking over the MN-REP/Restructure Plan that was given to you by both Education Minnesota and by a small group of us who met with Chair Her this past February. In fact, please contact me directly; I represent a grassroots group of 20,000 educators called "Minnesota Teachers for Pension Reform." We are absolutely focused on pension reform, and would love the opportunity to work with some of you this summer to explore solutions to fix the system. My contact information is below. I will follow up with a personal letter to each of you and my business card and hope to set up some time to speak with you in person after the legislative session ends.

Thank you,

Maggie Temple, M.Ed.

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My name is Maggie Temple. I've been a teacher for 30 years. More importantly, I also represent a grassroots group called MN Educators for Pension Reform. We have 20,000 members in this group who are absolutely focused on pension reform. And we vote. And frankly, we're sick of contributing to the political campaigns of politicians who pledge to help us and then do nothing.

I'm going to be real honest with you. Today is so important to me, I took a personal day from work. This is a desperate, last-ditch effort to ask for help. I'm losing hope. I'm exhausted and I'm fed up with the needs of teachers being ignored. The Tier II teacher pension system is broken. Let me restate that: the Tier II teacher pension system is broken. This state will go the way of Illinois. You know why Illinois can't find teachers? Because no one wants to work for 40 years in an increasingly difficult and dangerous profession. This is our future if something doesn't change.

We need a career rule. We need a reduction in the obscene penalties inflicted upon those who are often forced to retire early because of health concerns. We need deferred augmentation restored.

Please consider spending some time this summer looking over the MN-REP/Restructure Plan that was given to you by both our union, and by a small group of us who met with Chair Her this past February.

I'm going to pass out my card. I've got an eager group of educators who want to meet with you and forge a progressive, brave path toward pension reform. Please. Don't let us down. I understand you don't make the laws, but this committee has influence. Please add pension reform to your summer interim projects.

Thank you.