



EAST CENTRAL MINNESOTA EDUCATIONAL CABLE COOPERATIVE

April 7, 2025

Dear Chair Frentz and Esteemed Members of the LCPR:

As Chair of the legislative committee for the MN Association of School Administrators (MASA), I and MASA strongly support the provision of full retirement without penalty at age 60, specifically the provisions of HF1582 and SF2000.

On a personal level, I am in my thirty-sixth year of service to public education in multiple roles including middle/high school mathematics teacher, adjunct college teacher, instructional technology specialist and over 17 years in my current position leading a cooperative of public school districts in Central MN. I love what I do every day, but working in public education is exhausting and it is easy to see why new people are not choosing the profession when they know they would need to work until at least age 65 to see a full return on their retirement investments.

It is time to address the significant flaws in the current Tier II pension system. Despite being one of the most dedicated professions, teachers in Minnesota are burdened by a system that ranks near the bottom for teacher pensions nationwide. Meanwhile, Tier II teachers contribute some of the highest rates in the country. The laws that have been passed that greatly reduced Tier II pension benefits, including the disproportionate penalties for early retirement make it much more difficult for Minnesota to attract and retain the best educators, especially when compared to surrounding states.

I urge you to approve the bi-partisan House and Senate bills that advocate for an unreduced career rule of 60/30 and a reduction in early retirement penalties. A legislature that truly values Minnesota teachers must take concrete steps to fix this broken system.

Currently, funding comes from an increase to employer contributions to the pension fund and so, must include appropriately funding for Pension Adjustment Aid. However, there are other ways to fund this that can be considered as well. Over time, it will pay for itself as teachers and administrators retire 5 to 10 years earlier than is likely now and are replaced by those who, earlier in their careers, are lower on salary schedules.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Marc Johnson
Executive Director, ECMECC

