



HB 162 – TEACHER TENURE

- HB 162 makes an assumption that all teachers are “bad” teachers. It is a solution in search of a problem. Under current statute, school districts can extend the probationary time for a teacher if they determine they need more time to work with the teacher to improve teaching practice.
- Alaska hires more than 70% of its teachers from the Lower 48. HB 162 is another strike against Alaska’s ability to both recruit and retain quality teachers. With no defined benefit pension, no social security and declining working conditions due to budget cuts, a probationary period of five years will likely not be an incentive for new recruits to choose Alaska over 32 other states that have only a three year probationary period.
- In addition, retaining teachers will be difficult. What will be the incentive to stay if the law makes it possible for school districts to lay-off any teacher? The commitment teachers make to their students and communities has been acknowledged through due process and seniority rights.
- Only four states (Indiana, Missouri, Idaho and Mississippi) have tenure laws that require the amount of time that HB 162 is proposing. Alaska should not emulate this small number of states. Alaska should stay with the 32 states that offer tenure, as is current law in Alaska, on the first day of the fourth year of teaching.
- Since July 2006, Alaska hired 3,037 teachers, however, by June 2012, only 632 of those teachers had stayed in Alaska for more than 5 years.
 - Of the 12,297 PERS employees hired in the same period, only 989 stayed for 5 years or more.
- In the last two years defined contribution employees, both PERS and TRS, who have left public employment, have withdrawn almost \$33 million from the system, much of which has left the state.
 - According to the ARM report, this is a recent phenomenon with \$17 million withdrawn last fiscal year and \$16 million in the first 8 months of this fiscal year.
- Again, I strongly urge you to vote no. HB 162 is not about improving student achievement. Instead, it rewards administrators, taking them off the hook to complete proper evaluations of teachers and follow due process.