

**From:** [Lynn McNamara](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ky Holland](#); [Sen. Cathy Giessel](#); [Rep. Chuck Kopp](#); [Rep. Alyse Galvin](#)  
**Subject:** Submitted to ADN by Lynn  
**Date:** Friday, February 27, 2026 2:56:38 PM

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Dear Legislators,

I want to thank you for ALL the work you have done to shine the light on the issue that Alaska is the ONLY state that has neither access to a pension or Social Security for educators and other public servants.

I understand there is an opportunity to testify on this coming Monday. **Would you please send me any additional information on this opportunity** so I can share with our members in Anchorage, Eagle River, Fairbanks, Sitka and Homer? I assume testimony can be given ahead by written submission and by phone, but some have asked can they do it at the LIO. **I am hoping to send information out soon.**

This is what I have at this moment:

I recently submitted the following commentary with the assistance of Matt Moser who helped me with the specifics of the complex details. It does fit the ADN guidelines, but have yet to see or hear back. Please let me know if there is anything you think of to add or if there is anything that might be framed in a better way as I do plan to testify on Monday.

I plan to testify on Monday but am leaving Anchorage late Monday night for DC. I am part of the team putting on the DKG International (**Educator's Society, 46,000 strong, 97 years old**) US Forum National Legislative Seminar March 8-11, which happens every other year.

SO, I have appointments with both our Senators (or their staff- time will tell) on issues dealing with education and specifically the huge problem of teacher retention and some ideas our organization has to make a dent. I would appreciate **if you could share anything yet of how the dissolution of the Department of Education is specifically impacting Alaska's students. An important aspect of what the DOE does is to protect our most vulnerable students when disabilities or violations of their rights keep them from getting the education our state has promised them.**

Sincerely,

**Lynn McNamara**

DKG Alaska State President

NW Regional Rep. to the DKG International US Forum

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**Alaska Has Fixed the Pension Mistakes of the Past  
— Now It's Time to Fix the Workforce**

For years, Alaska's pension debate has been framed as a choice between fiscal responsibility and workforce stability. As a retired teacher and librarian who spent decades in Alaska's classrooms and libraries, I see that framing as a false choice. The education of our students should not be pitted yearly against all the other needs or wants of our state. Recently, I was shocked to hear that over 5,000 of Alaska's children started school this year with NO teacher assigned by the first day of school.

I am fortunate to have retired with a pension that provides the stability I need to stay in the state I love. But more importantly, I know firsthand that my students benefited from 40 years of experience, surrounded by other lifelong educators who weren't constantly looking for the exit to support their families.

The rate of turnover for Alaskan educators has increased substantially since 2005, and so I am looking carefully at the proposal to return to a more modest pension offering. Alaska is the ONLY state where teachers have no pension, nor are they able to be a part of Social Security.

Recently, the Alaska Retirement Board presented an updated analysis that should fundamentally reset this discussion. The data confirms two important truths: the financing framework has been corrected, and the long-term investment assumptions underlying our retirement system remain sound.

A common criticism of a defined benefit plan has been the 7.25% investment return assumption. Critics argue this is unrealistic. However, the Board's long-term rolling return analysis tells a different story. Over 30-year rolling periods—the true time horizon for pension funding—returns have averaged 7.9%.

This is not a projection; it is historical performance. Over decades, investment performance converges toward these long-term averages, making the current assumption conservative relative to our experience.

The second major criticism is that returning to a defined benefit structure would repeat past mistakes. But as the Board's presentation clarifies, the problem was never the pension model itself—it was how we handled that mortgage.

Following 2014, Alaska used 25-year "layered" payment schedules that backloaded costs. This pushed billions in debt beyond 2039. That structural weakness has now been addressed. The Board has:

- Shortened layering from 25 years to 15 years.
- Reduced payroll growth assumptions to align with actual experience.
- Adopted policies to pay down liabilities faster, reducing interest costs.

The Board's modeling shows that this 15-year approach reduces total costs by approximately \$220 million and leaves significantly less debt for the next generation. That is not fiscal recklessness; it is fiscal discipline.

In my career, a network of experienced teachers mentored newer teachers, providing a standard of community and continuity that benefitted students, parents, teachers and

administration. Today, those veterans are leaving after five years because they have no incentive to stay. This revolving door isn't just a budget line item; it's the continued loss of institutional knowledge which hurts our students and results in unrealized potential.

House Bill 78 would not return Alaska to the past. It would establish a new defined benefit tier operating within a corrected amortization structure, realistic payroll assumptions, and disciplined oversight.

I know the peace of mind that comes with a stable retirement. It was part of what allowed me to focus entirely on my students, their families and my school my entire career. We have fixed the financing framework; the math is on our side. Now, it is time to provide that same stability to the next generation of teachers, troopers, and public servants.

**From:** [Theresa Nangle Obermeyer, Ph.D.](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Chuck Kopp](#)  
**Subject:** Pension Reform  
**Date:** Friday, February 13, 2026 10:36:53 AM

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Dear Rep. Kopp:

Dear Rep. Kopp:

Thank you so much for your leadership in advocating for Pension Reform. Alaska has to get back to some kind of defined benefit. It is costing more to recruit public employees, train them, and then have them leave Alaska. We have to become a more stable place where people can raise a family and live here for a lifetime.

Again, thanks.

Sincerely,

Theresa  
(816)853-5950 Cell

**From:** [Peter Panarese](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Chuck Kopp](#)  
**Subject:** Defined Benefits  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 10, 2026 10:51:39 AM

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Good day your honor.

I just finished reading this mornings ADN article about your efforts to re-establish the defined benefits program for SOA employees. You have my full support!

Our paths have crossed a few times in the past. I retired from Alaska State Parks long ago and had business with Fred Dyson along the way. We met way back when you were working with Fred.

Park Rangers, Police Standard Council, Chugach State Park or some other issue along those lines brought us together. But within the last few months, I spoke with two park staff that lament the fact that we train new rangers, equip them with state of the art law enforcement gear, certify them, put them through a rigorous Field Office training program, and within two years they leave us for the feds or local law enforcement outside.

Why? Defined benefits. Solid retirement.

Thank you for your efforts.

Pete  
907-720-1997  
Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Peter Panarese](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Chuck Kopp](#)  
**Subject:** HB 78  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 18, 2026 10:17:29 AM

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Your commentary regarding the legislation restoring a defined benefit retirement system for the SOA was excellent. I fear that many of my fellow citizens will not grasp the fundamental concepts; less people, more overtime, less people, reduced work output, less people, poorer work environments. Might the crisis with staffing our prisons be an example for them?

Thank you for your leadership on this matter.

All the best you Honor - Pete  
Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [roberto mikenis](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Chuck Kopp](#)  
**Subject:** House bill 78  
**Date:** Friday, February 6, 2026 6:09:33 PM

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Hi Chuck I'm writing this as a special education teacher who has always envisioned having Alaska be home. House bill 78 has gotten my attention and I'm wondering the chances it has of passing to become law. I ask this because this bill becoming law definitely affects me coming to Alaska. I'm originally from Chicago Illinois where if I stayed in Chicago and taught I would collect a pension near 6,000 a month. Even if that pension was cut in half I would 100% come back to Alaska to teach. I'm not sure if this email will even matter but as a former Alaskan educator who wants to come back to Alaska this bill means a lot to me. I appreciate your time Chuck and I hope you have a good night.