



February 24, 2026

The Honorable Donnie Olson
Co-Chairman, Senate Finance Committee
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 508
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: HB 78 – Support Defined Contribution Option with Inclusion of Lifetime Income Investment Options

Dear Chairman Olson,

Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association of America (“TIAA”) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on House Bill No. 78, and we strongly recommend that the Defined Contribution (DC) Plan remains a benefit option for state employees. Most importantly, the DC plan should include a lifetime income investment option embedded in the plan, significantly improving its ability to provide a secure retirement. Since Alaska public employees do not participate in Social Security, it is critical that the DC plan contains investment options that can provide guaranteed lifetime income in retirement or, put another way, a lifetime paycheck similar to what Social Security provides.

About TIAA and Our Commitment to Alaskans

Our experience providing lifetime income to government workers and retirees goes back more than a century. TIAA was founded by Andrew Carnegie in 1918 to provide participants and educators with financial security and dignity through guaranteed lifetime income in retirement. In 2024 alone, we paid more than \$5.9 billion in lifetime income to retired clients, including payments to 30,000 clients over age 90 and 1,500 over age 100.¹

Building on this foundation, the University of Alaska has partnered with TIAA for over four decades, providing retirement and financial advice. Today, we are honored to manage \$472 million in assets for 2,585 employees. While the University DC Plan always provided lifetime income investment options, last year it adopted an in-plan annuity embedded within a default target date fund. This innovative design allows participants to save for retirement over their working careers with access to low-cost in-plan annuities that provide a guaranteed income stream through retirement. These Alaskans now have the ability to annuitize a portion of their savings into guaranteed lifetime income they cannot outlive.

The Changing Workforce Demographics

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that over a 10-year period, the median tenure of public sector employees fell from 7.8 years in 2014 to 6.2 years in 2024.² In fact, state workers have seen the largest decrease relative to federal and municipal employees. This increased mobility among government workers, therefore, makes portable retirement benefits increasingly essential in attracting and retaining employees, especially for military spouses and younger workers who live and work in Alaska.³

Multiple studies have found that retirement savings in the first decade of your career are essential to achieving retirement security. This reality makes the DC plan particularly valuable for state employees and those early in their careers, ensuring they can begin building retirement security immediately upon employment. If Alaska removes this valuable retirement option, it risks more than just those individuals’ retirement security. If Alaskans are deprived of

¹As of December 31, 2024, TIAA paid out \$5.9B in total annuity income. This figure represents all annuity income, including guaranteed and additional amounts, for all of TIAA’s annuity products.

²BLS: <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/tenure.pdf>

³DMDC Data, December 2025: There are over 10,000 active-duty service members, National Guard and reserve spouses living in Alaska.

their savings early in their careers, it is most likely they will need additional government services and aid in their retirement. The broader fiscal consequences of inadequate retirement savings are significant. According to a 2023 Pew Foundation study, states face \$334.3 billion in aggregate increased spending by 2040, with \$1.3 trillion in combined state and federal expenditures.⁴ It is critical Alaska promote retirement plans that best fit their workers' retirement needs while balancing the fiscal soundness of the state.

The Value of Lifetime Income

TIAA brings both rigorous research and proven experience to this legislative discussion. Our position is grounded in findings from a TIAA Institute report, which is a comprehensive analysis of 85 major retirement systems across all 50 states.⁵ Research identifies the specific plan design features that consistently enable public employees to achieve the industry's essential benchmark: replacing 80% of pre-retirement income with guaranteed income sources, to maintain financial security throughout retirement. This important design feature would allow the DC plan to provide a pension-like income stream in retirement and at no additional cost to the state. Incorporating guaranteed lifetime income will address concerns around the state DC plan lacking these protections.

Conclusion

If the state decides to reinstate the Defined Benefit Plan, we urge you to keep the DC plan open as an option for state employees, recognizing workforce trends, and allowing individual choice in managing their retirement. Lifetime income options are particularly important for public employees since they do not participate in Social Security. A lifetime income investment option ensures retirees receive guaranteed monthly income throughout retirement, addressing the same longevity protection that Social Security provides to other American workers.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments related to Alaska's ongoing pension reform efforts. Please let us know if we can be helpful to you going forward or provide you with any additional information.

Sincerely,



Zeny Agullana

Senior Director, State Government Relations

M: 916-532-1035

Zeny.Agullana@tiaa.org

⁴PEW Charitable Trust: https://econsultsolutions.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Impacts_of_Insufficient_Retirement_Savings_May2023.pdf

⁵Common Thread Link: <https://www.tiaa.org/public/institute/publication/2025/the-common-thread-fifty-states-retirement-report>

Doniece Gott

From: Peter Van Brunt <peter.s.vanbrunt@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2026 2:35 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Pensions+for+Public+Service!

I know a number of good teachers who have recently left Alaska to go teach in the pacific northwest. Their number one complaint was poor retirement benefits here.

Doniece Gott

From: Stephanie Rhoades <rhodo58@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2026 3:08 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Pensions for Public Service! HB 78

I am writing in support of HB 78. Surely you have seen the recent opinion piece in the ADN about two bright teachers who left the state of Alaska because they have no realistic financial future working here. HB 78 offers a financially responsible defined benefit retirement for our public servants: teachers, first responders, and other state employees. The recent DOC overtime costs, high vacancy rates in government work, and lack of retention would also be addressed by this bill. Our kids need a more incentive than an unrealistic 401(K) to stay spend their professional lives in the state and working in public service.



Stephanie Rhoades
1338 F Street
Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 229 3016

Doniece Gott

From: Julie Umbarger <julieumbarger11@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2026 4:16 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: HB 78

Hello,

My name is Julianna Umbarger, and I am a public school educator in Alaska. I am testifying today in strong support of HB 78.

I chose a career in public education knowing it would never make me wealthy, but believing it would provide stability, purpose, and the ability to build a secure future. Over time, that promise has eroded particularly when it comes to retirement security.

HB 78 is not about special treatment. It is about restoring a fair, predictable retirement system that allows Alaska to recruit and retain qualified educators and support staff. Without meaningful retirement benefits, Alaska will continue to lose experienced teachers to other states or to entirely different professions. I see this happening in real time.

As a younger educator, it is deeply discouraging to know that I am expected to give decades of service while facing uncertainty about whether I will ever be able to retire with dignity. This affects morale, retention, and ultimately student outcomes. Stable educators create stable schools—and students benefit when teachers are able to stay, grow, and commit long-term to their communities.

Investing in educator retirement is an investment in Alaska's future. HB 78 helps restore trust in the profession and sends a message that this state values the people who educate its children.

I urge the legislature to pass HB 78 and take a meaningful step toward strengthening public education in Alaska.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Julianna Umbarger

Doniece Gott

From: Beth Kemp <beth.kemp@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2026 4:18 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Pensions for Public Service!

To Whom It May Concern:

I wrote this letter to the editor a few years ago. The message is still the same two years later. Dunleavy has continued to not make progress and not fund education and public services correctly. That is a shame. Please help fix our pensions for teachers, firefighters and police officers.

"123-Eyes on Me!" In the past, this was an attention grabber for my class. Now, I'm using it for all Alaskans. There is a crisis, and many of our Alaskan families are just starting to become aware of it. However, many teachers, principals, staff, students, and families have been feeling the repercussions. As we head toward the August 20 state election primary, I hope you'll vote for pro-education candidates because the future of this state depends on it.

The Anchorage School District (ASD) has close to 500 positions open. There are teacher aide, teacher, and specialist positions unfilled. *There are 46 unfilled teaching positions open.* There is a huge shortage of substitute teachers, which doesn't help the morale and the stress levels for teachers. Last year, I long-term subbed for a class for the first quarter and was asked several times to fill unfilled teaching positions in the ASD. There is talk about a teacher shortage, but in reality, it is not a teacher shortage; it's a teacher exodus. Tier-2 teachers are retiring, and we don't have a plan to incentivize new teacher retention since Alaska has the worst retirement program in the country. Governor Dunleavy, offering teachers a one-time bonus of a few thousand dollars is unacceptable. If you were Tier-3 teacher, would you be happy with that bandaid and no pension?

I "retired" in 2022. I would have been a Tier-2 teacher with benefits at retirement, but I stayed home with my kids until they began school. I began as a Tier-3 teacher. (The teacher tier system is different than the state's.) No Social Security, no pension, and no health care after retirement. Tens of thousands of dollars in sick leave was not paid to me when I left due to being Tier-3. I would have stayed a few more years, but there was not a pension carrot keeping me there. I ended my career with a huge class and behavior issues I couldn't manage without support from above.

Fast forward to 2023/2024. Governor Dunleavy has slashed half (\$87 million) of the ONE-TIME funding our state legislators had approved. This year, most legislators tried to update the BSA simply to catch up with inflation, but House Republicans voted to sustain the Governor's veto of that essential bill. Schools are struggling to keep the lights on while the governor has given himself a 67% raise. We haven't had a raise in the BSA in seven years, while inflation and costs of health care and maintenance have gone up. (Both Dunleavy and Bishop have Tier-1 pensions and medical care for the rest of their lives and now have another salary with the state.) Meanwhile, the state has a new unfunded mandate to raise student outcomes. It's a wonderful concept, but school districts are not given extra funds to hire staff to meet the new criteria. If they were given funds, many positions wouldn't be filled because the wages and benefits aren't attractive.

Alaska is not addressing the root of the problem—we need to support teachers and staff with reasonable class sizes. We need more paraprofessionals/teacher aides to help with classes and behavior. We need to pay a living wage to staff, bus drivers, paraprofessionals, and teachers. We need to bring back a pension for school employees. In addition, we need to support a return of pensions for state employees, firefighters and our police officers. If Alaska wants to keep a talented workforce, we need to be competitive with the lower 48 and offer good benefits.

Defunding public education has been devastating for neighborhood schools, charter schools, and alternative programs. Every family has a stake in the success of our schools, just like every local business has a stake in an outstanding public education system that helps students develop skills to be innovative and productive employees.

There is already a large migration of Alaskans moving to the lower 48. It's up to all of us as voters to fix this crisis now. In the August primary and November general election, let's make some positive changes for Alaska and our future by electing legislators who support pro-education bipartisan majorities. The future of our state and our economy depends on it.

Sincerely,
Beth Kemp

Doniece Gott

From: Cheryl & Mark Lovegreen <lovegreensnorth@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2026 4:28 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: HB 78

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

As a retired teacher, I have seen many teachers come and go under the old defined benefit system and the new defined contribution system. In my experience, teachers stay for fewer years under the defined contribution pension. The fact that no teachers get Social Security credit for their teaching makes their situation worse.

I support HB 78 because it will create a fairer retirement system for public employees and help to recruit and retain quality employees. This is borne out in the 2023 Governor's Teacher Retention and Recruitment Task Force study, where they found that workforce turnover is significantly higher under the defined contribution plan. With HB 78, school districts and other public services will spend less on recruitment and keep employees without constant turnover, leading to better outcomes.

This bill is an important step toward turning around our public education crisis. Please pass HB 78 and let our teachers and other public employees have a more secure future, in turn giving our families and children a better future here in Alaska.

Cheryl Lovegreen
Anchorage

Doniece Gott

From: KATHLEEN HANSON <Kathleen.Hanson@matsuk12.us>
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2026 4:34 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: ALASKA TEACHERS PENSION
Attachments: Retirement committee.docx

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to respectfully urge you to make state employees — specifically teachers — a priority in your financial decisions. Educators in Alaska have been placed on the backburner for far too long, and we are now at a critical and deeply concerning point.

With Tier I and Tier II employees reaching retirement eligibility, Alaska is on the brink of a significant teacher shortage. At the same time, Tier III employees are left without the option of a defined pension. This disparity is not only discouraging but unsustainable. Why should one tier receive a secure retirement while another, hired only a few years later, is denied the same opportunity? Being hired five short years after the cutoff does not mean I have not worked as hard. In many ways, today's educators are carrying heavier expectations than ever before.

Since COVID-19, the demands placed on teachers have shifted dramatically. We are navigating increased academic gaps, rising social-emotional needs, and expanding state and district mandates — all while continuing to foster a love of learning in our classrooms. Teachers are asked to do more with less and rise to that challenge every single day because we care deeply about our students' futures.

I am proud to say that for the past 15 years, my kindergarten students in the Mat-Su Borough School District have consistently ranked in the top 10% in the district, and I would confidently argue among the top in the state. I love my job. I love the families I serve. I love the state I was born and raised in.

But I am now faced with an unimaginable decision: leave the career and community I cherish to secure a stable retirement elsewhere.

A pension is not simply a benefit — it is stability. It is the ability to remain in Alaska, to stay in my home, to raise my grandchildren here, and to preserve the lifelong roots my family has built. Without a defined pension, Tier III employees — including teachers, firefighters, and police officers — will be forced to seek employment in states that offer retirement security. Lifelong Alaskans will relocate to places where their retirement contributions can provide certainty rather than risk being stretched thin until they run out.

If Alaska does not implement meaningful changes and restore a pension option for Tier III state employees, we will see an accelerating departure of dedicated public servants. Recruitment will suffer. Retention will suffer. Most importantly, Alaska's students will suffer.

I urge you to act now, before the teacher shortage becomes irreversible. Invest in the educators who invest their lives in Alaska's children. Give Tier III employees the pension and retirement security they deserve and have earned.

Alaska's future depends on the decisions you make today.

Respectfully,
Kathleen Hanson

Kathleen Hanson
Kindergarten Teacher
Shaw Elementary
907-352-0523

Doniece Gott

From: Mary Ann Kondro <kondrokake@rocketmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2026 5:07 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Teacher Pension in Alaska

The teacher shortage in Alaskan schools is at a critical level. Our state needs to support and encourage teachers to stay, continue to share their love of teaching at all grade levels, and in all communities. Improving our teacher Pension is one sure way to support, and one really good reason to encourage teachers retention.

My longevity, of 30+ years within the Alaskan School system was wonderful and my pension earned was a huge reason for staying for the long run...

Thank you for supporting a solid Alaskan Teacher Pension.

Mary Ann Kondro
Retired teacher - Kake City Schools

Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Mae Ditty <mliditty@runningak.org>
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2026 5:29 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: In Favor of HB 78

Hi!

I have worked for the SOA for about 5 years now. My retirement account is about to vest, which means I'll probably step away from working for the state in favor of a higher paying job with more reliable retirement benefits. I've suffered through the retention crisis and have been moved about the state, having been laid off twice in the last 6 years. It feels absolutely awful and I really can't put up with it any more.

I hope ya'll restore the pension benefits, as that would retain me and many of the more impressive coworkers I've had while working for the state. (The good ones get poached, leaving the state with many shitty workers and relatively few good ones.)

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Mae Ditty

Animal Runners of Alaska
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t: (907) 947-4500
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Doniece Gott

From: Lara Applebaum <laraapplebaum@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2026 6:07 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: House Bill 78

I am a Tier 3 Alaska public school teacher serving for 15 years now. As a single mom, a pension would be a saving grace for my future.

Doniece Gott

From: Kate LaSota <katelasota@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2026 7:03 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Pensions for Public Service!

Hi,

I started as a PERS in late 2006, as a teacher's aide. I got vested as I earned a teaching certificate. Then I successfully got a TERS job. I got vested there too, but I don't have enough years in either system to access the Health Retirement Money in each account, I don't think I got Social Security amounts to benefit my check size as an elder, and the experience of working in schools degraded dreadfully as there was a skill drain and educators fled. So I left the PERS and TERS systems too.

As the quality of education decreased throughout Fairbanks, families moved away. Our health clinics started having a very tough time finding doctors who would want to raise their families here. Volunteer organizations diminished. Less kids could read, and stay out of trouble. School has become a more stressful experience for everyone in buildings, daily.

I hear that legislators are wondering Why a public pension system matters.

The answer is the same Why you love your family and friends and community and want the best for it.

We are all connected and need basic needs met to be healthier and more generous. Retirement security supports community security. Other states and countries have this figured out. Alaska used to know this, and value it. We can know and value it again.

Doniece Gott

From: Nancy Hummel <nhummelak@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 28, 2026 7:00 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Teacher pensions

About 20 years ago, the legislative body made a huge mistake when they obliterated teacher pensions! At the time, they claimed that there was a crisis that the pension system brought on. WRONG! The problem was that for many years the legislative body deferred their responsibility for paying into the pension.

FACT: I paid into my pension with every single paycheck, no deferments!

As a result of the new system the legislature initiated, teachers left our state, and are still leaving our state, with the money they put in and with our state portion of money! Mathematically and financially, it makes absolute sense for them to do that. However, it drains our state of finances and teachers who have accomplished five years of teaching; a critical number if you look at the research.

Back when the legislature changed that retirement system, NEA-Alaska (National Education Association) warned them of the consequences that we see today. NEA warned them of the devastation to our schools and our communities, but they wouldn't listen.

Now is the time to reestablish a decent pension, so we can attract and retain quality teachers. Do the right thing; reestablish a decent pension for teachers,

Nancy and Marc Hummel

Fairbanks, Alaska for over 43 years

Doniece Gott

From: Sydney Reese <sydneyreese@live.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 28, 2026 8:46 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. James Kaufman; Sen. Mike Cronk; Rep. Andi Story
Subject: Reinstate Pensions for Public Service

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Sydney Reese, I am a long-term Alaskan resident and I'm writing to you to express my strong support for HB78/SB28 to restore a defined benefit retirement. Both my husband and I are early career public school teachers and would like to make Alaska our permanent home, but the lack of stability for public employees has left us in doubt. Alaska's declining population reflects the urgency in which the Legislature needs to reinstate a pension program for public employees.

My parents do not have enough money to retire, despite being at retirement age and having worked for the State of Alaska for 20 years. They are looking to retire elsewhere, not just outside of the State of Alaska, but *outside of the United States entirely*. They would love to retire in Alaska, where they can watch their grandchildren grow up, but the high cost of living and lack of retirement stability is forcing them to flee the state that they love. Do I want my children's grandparents to retire thousands of miles away, in a foreign country where they can get by on a lower monthly cost of living? Absolutely not.

They are not unique — Alaska's population has been in decline for 11 consecutive years in 2024. Alaska's current approach to retirement has led to increased turnover rates, particularly among public school employees. Every year, 20% of teachers, education support staff, and administrators leave their jobs at an annual cost to the state of \$20 million.

As my husband and I consider the future of our family and careers, my parent's retirement plight is a warning to us, to rethink our decision to stay in Alaska and search for a state that offers their public employees more secure retirement benefits — which is, incidentally, *every other state except Alaska*.

As an Alaskan who wants to remain in our state, to raise my family in the state, please support all legislation to restore a real retirement system for Alaska public employees.

Thank you,

Sydney Reese

Doniece Gott

From: shelleyballou (null) <shelleyballou@aol.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 28, 2026 8:52 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: HB 78- Written Testimony

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to express my support of SB 78 as a public employee, tax payer, and high school educator.

I am deeply concerned about Alaska's ongoing educator turnover crisis and the serious financial impact it is having on our state. Alaska has among the highest educator turnover rates in the country. This is not just an educational issue — it is a **fiscal** issue that costs our state millions of dollars every single year.

A 2017 study by the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) estimated that teacher turnover costs approximately \$20,000 per teacher. At that time, the total annual cost to our state was estimated at \$20 million. That figure is nearly a decade old.

More recent estimates from the Anchorage School District indicate that it now costs approximately \$27,000 per teacher to recruit and train a replacement. The costs for administrators are even higher — estimated in the range of \$100,000 per position. These figures reflect recruitment, hiring, onboarding, training, and the lost productivity that comes with constant staffing changes.

Instead of spending millions replacing educators, we should be investing in retention strategies and competitive compensation.

My husband (a 3rd grade teacher) and I are stuck working 1-2 additional jobs each to make enough money to contribute to a separate retirement account we have made since we will not be able to retire until we are 70 under this system. The current TRS plan is not enough for our hard working public employees. This has been amplified by system outages in 2024.

I urge you to prioritize HB 78. This bill is a step in the right direction for state employee retention. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Shelley Labanowski

Palmer, AK

Doniece Gott

From: Patricia Stark <pstark@mosquitonet.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 28, 2026 2:30 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: HB Bill 78

Dear Senate Finance Committee,
Please support this bill.

The teacher and principal turnover is hurting our education system. In 2024 17% of teachers and 27% of principals left their school districts. 5,000 of our students started the school year without a certified teacher leading the classroom. A 2017 ISER study put turnover costs at \$20,000 per teacher totaling \$20 million for our state. Now 9 years later Anchorage School District estimates it cost \$27,000 per teacher to recruit and train.

This turnover hurts student achievement. According to the UAA Center for Education and Policy Research at ISER, the 5 school districts with the lowest turnover had 85.5% of students scoring proficient in reading.

The 5 school districts with the highest turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

Turnover is higher in the defined contribution system than under defined benefit. This is shown in the Alaska Teacher Recruitment and Retention Study.

Among the findings:

Workforce turnover in defined contribution is significantly higher than in defined benefit.

Worker retention during the early years of employment has dropped significantly between 2005 and 2021.

As a retired teacher, I implore you to support this bill.

Patricia Stark
Fairbanks Alaska

Doniece Gott

From: Marc Grober <marc@interak.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 28, 2026 5:48 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Bring back defined benefit pensions

Yes, Alaska swallowed the nonsense, hook, line, and sinker, and, to put the best face on it, entered into a lengthy experiment which has now proved that absent an adequate benefit package including health coverage and a defined benefit pension, Alaska simply can't attract and retain state, municipal, or school employees.

Alaskan CAN afford to invest in Alaskans. We can't afford to subsidize BigOil or other extraction industries, and we can't afford to engage in the ifeological nonsense pandered by the Governor.

It's high time we ceased spending our funds obstructing access to data, obscuring the facts, misrepresenting the State's conduct, and funding political litigation.

Marc Grober, Esq. Ret.
5610 Radcliff Dr
Anchorage, AK 99504

Doniece Gott

From: Scott Hummel <scotthummel86@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 01, 2026 8:45 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Public Testimony - HB 78 / SB 28: A return to impoverished DBs

Greetings Senate Finance Committee Members,

Here we are again in legislative session, thank you for your service and my prayer is for a productive, low-drama, session.

My name is Scott Hummel, from Fairbanks Senate Seat P / District 32, I represent myself, as a State Employee with 5-years dedication, my wife, as a Public Middle School Music Teacher here in the FNSB-SD with 12-years of dedication, and our confident, curious, and joyous 20-month old baby-girl, Natalie.

I would like to speak specifically to the Retention and Retention issue at the heart of HB78/SB28, and **point squarely at the Salary Study which has finally been released. Salaries are 15-45% under the 65th Percentile.** With great respect, I humbly, and plainly state ... that DB offerings will not change our State of Alaska Public Sector Recruitment and Retention issues. We have heard countless Directors, Commissioners, and paid consultants tell us, our salaries are too low. **I also know that the State OMB estimate to implement the 50th percentile of \$93M and the more appropriate 65th Percentile \$160M is likely unrealistic at this time. Which is an incredible travesty.**

As Directors, Commissioners have testified, I will affirm, on the inside, day-to-day operations, State Employee conversations are CONSTANT the hardships created by current take-home salaries. Salary Schedules are too low from Year 0 to Year 30. A pension, calculated AT these low salary rates, will not change our R&R issues. Furthermore, 90% of DC retirement gains come from compound interest accrued through investments. DB plans will transition a great deal of that "unfunded liability" back onto the State. And I need not remind you of our current and future fiscal picture.

As the fictional character Rod Tidwell once entertained us all from classic movie, Jerry McGuire said, "Show me the Money." (It would be nice, right?)

I would like to reach out, again, **to speak against** this push towards a return to DB as described in HB78 / SB28 by establishing Tier IV / Tier V DBs & pensions. Especially as it is being "heralded as this magic bullet" to solve our retention and recruitment issues.

As stated above, and again for emphasis, State of Alaska Salaries are 15-45% UNDER the 65th Percentiles for Market compensation.

My wife is a third generation, 11-yr music educator, here in the Fairbanks North Star Borough. Her cousins and aunts are also educators. My mother was a teacher. I'm very familiar with the Legacy Tier I/II DB plans. After reviewing HB 78 and listening to the testimony from "retirement security professionals" last year. I can assure you that the lack of a 'modest pension,' as proposed in this DB plan, is NOT the reason my wife and I have an annual discussion about her future as an educator. And vis-a-vis, our residence in our Home State and Community here in the Golden Heart of Alaska.

It is 0-1% annual salary raises, the lack of a matching retirement program, and the mind-blowing increases in medical premiums the District has been offering.

Add to it, this constant budget battle,

- increasing class sizes,
- the transition to digital teaching materials,
- the oppressive Parental/Teacher interactions,
- the additional mandatory testing full-days,
- the ridiculous 8-year budget slashing practice under this Administration as an extension of budget cuts going back nearly 16-years which has created a constant fear of 'which school will be closed next/will I still have a job in this economy,' and
- this cultural phenomenon of student 'infallibility' and District / Administrative deferment to unreasonable 'squeaky-wheel parents.'

I probably don't need to point out that these 16-years of cuts / flat-funding, exceed the 12-years a student might be part of public education.

So much of public testimony and emphasis is that, "there are no, or inadequate retirement benefits" under DC, Tier III / Tier IV State Public Sector employees. This is simply not true. Tier III DC creates an employee mandatory contribution but for some reason unknown to me, omit the state Match / SBS or Social Security contributions. The absence of these additional monetary commitments to public sector teachers is inexplicable. This omission in Teacher DC plans has created the concept that DC plans are inferior to DB plans, and thus the feeling that teachers are poorly supported in existing retirement DC plans.

Current DC plans are not without their faults, as FINALLY SB55 and SB198 are seeking to rectify those issues. Also, the language in Educator DC plans, placing the 'match-funding' ownership on the School-Districts are being neglected by both local governance and likely state governance is ignorant these matches are not being met.

Similar to what Sen. Stedman has offered, in SB55, which will attempt to correct the exclusion of Public Sector Educators into the SBS plans, with a State Match. These State Matches are a very much an important component to ensuring a secure and comfortable retirement as a reward for years of Public Service. And Sen. Kaufman's offering in SB198 reducing the medical eligibility AT NO PROJECTED COST to the State should be a no-brainer, enticement.

Specifically, I would like share that my wife, who is a public educator, until recently was completely unaware of the SOA DC Empower Tier III retirement Empower account. I feel like the quick once-over education/orientation by the Unions to the existence of this account is specifically biasing the narrative. The State or Unions need to include mandatory introductions for Public Sector employees, through the Empower management professionals, to introduce them adequately to this DC retirement plan. **The real crime of these Mandatory DC plans, are the default use of "TargetDate Funds" which under-perform comparable market plans (producing 4-10% over the life of the funds), and all but guarantee a "retirement in poverty," similar to pension plans at 15-45% under 65th Market pay salaries, especially in this inflationary period.**

Through either decree by the ARM Board or some other Div RnB directive from the Commissioner/Director, a simple change of these accounts to the S&P500 Index fund, could result in 12-24% returns. Yes, it is true, the market is volatile, it is true there may be down or flat years, as we saw recently in 2022; however, averaging returns over any 15-year interval nets a +12% return. Far improved from the "Retirement Security" professionals claiming 8% and using these TargetDate Funds as their comparative performance indices.

Finally, much of this emphasis of HB78 is touts the 180 day "current employee choice" between DC / DB. IF my testimony doesn't sway you from support / wishes / belief in DB plans; I would firmly implore that you equally support amendments to DC plans found in SB55, SB198 to give DC members A FAIR, and HONEST evaluation of their options for retirement here in the Great State of Alaska.

Please pass SB55, SB198, and do what you can to implement the Segal State Salary Study. I know the difficulty of this ask in which State Salaries are made competitive as identified in the 2023 Salary Study ... but these steps are what it will take to make Alaska Competitive and Desirable as an employer and actually move the needle on Recruitment and Retention.

Lastly, both of our sets of parents, placed our PFDs into accounts for our college tuitions at UAF. The Executive/Legislative inability to implement simple, common-sense revenue measures, as identified by ISER, on Corporations and reforms of SB21 Oil Taxes is adversely impacting Alaskans today, and tomorrow.

Thank you,
Scott Hummel, Sen A / House 32
907-590-4677



To Encourage and Be Encouraged



Heb 10:19-25



Doniece Gott

From: Christine Niemi <cmniemi@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 01, 2026 11:16 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: HB 78

Please support this very important bill to allow our hard working Alaska government workers the opportunity for a defined benefit retirement plan. As a retired TRS defined benefit plan member & Alaska resident, I have a stable retirement income permitting me to be able to be a supportive community member. Speaking as a grandmother, we need to be able to attract & keep a solid workforce in our schools & government offices. The current defined contribution plan is not supporting a stable workforce or community & I personally know people who have left our state to seek a better & more stable future.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine Niemi
Douglas, Alaska

Doniece Gott

From: Louisa Ortiz <louisamortiz@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 01, 2026 11:39 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Testimony for HB 78

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

I am Lucy Ortiz, a third generation Alaskan educator and certified firefighter. I am writing to voice my support of HB 78 and a defined benefits plan for educators and public safety employees. I am concerned that in a recent press conference Senator Stedman described our current retirement system as "generous." As a teacher this hurt. It felt as though Senator Stedman was stating that our state's dedicated educators and public safety employees deserve an unstable future upon retirement.

I grew up in the halls of Ketchikan High School, watching my parents pour hours and hours into lesson planning, coaching, and supporting the school district in many different ways. They were able to do this with the assurance of a defined benefits plan for security upon retirement.

As a teacher now, I have no such comfort. The instability of the current defined contribution plan forces me to decide every single year whether I can remain in the state that is my home and that shaped me, or if I need to move down south to secure my future. It's a balance between the joy of my community and current life, compared to the knowledge that every year I stay here, I risk an unknown future.

Every year in Alaska we spend about \$27,000 recruiting and retaining each new teacher and about \$100,000 per principal. In 2024, 17% of teachers and 27% of principals left their districts. Our state's retention numbers have decreased significantly over the years of the defined contribution plan. This equates to a significant financial cost to our districts and statewide education system.

This doesn't even account for the effect it has on our students. Teacher retention affects [student achievement](#). At the beginning of this school year, 5000 of our students did not have a certified teacher in their classroom. Last year, the five districts with the lowest turnover rates had 85.8% of their students scoring proficient on the end of year reading assessment. The five districts with the highest turnover rates for teachers had only 46.9% of their students score proficient in reading.

Please, do better for our educators and our students. Vote in support of HB 78.

Sincerely,
Louisa Ortiz

Doniece Gott

From: Amy Hogue <amydoug13@icloud.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 01, 2026 11:44 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Pensions for Public Service!

Please support House Bill 78. I am lucky that I started working in the schools prior to the end of a defined pension. I would not still be in Alaska if I did not have a defined pension. The lack of a defined pension is significantly hurting our schools. Teachers, related services providers, administrators, and support personnel have no reason to stay in education. Every year, we lose great educators who have no reason to stay in Alaska; they came for the adventure, but cannot afford to stay and live the dream.

Trust me, education is significantly different from what it was 25 years ago when I started. Many amazing things are happening every day in schools, but the struggle is real, even for the best teacher. With wages stagnant, no defined pension, and the cost of living rising, I know why people are leaving the state for a better work scenario.

Please be part of the solution to help fix this problem and support House Bill 78.

Amy Hogue
Public School Speech Language Pathologist Soldotna, AK 99669

Doniece Gott

From: Lindsay Pinkelman <ftlak1@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 01, 2026 12:16 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Pensions for Public Service!

Two House Bill 78 Committee:

My name is Lindsay Pinkelman. I am a former High School Counselor with the Delta Greely School District, and I am here today to respectfully urge you to pass House Bill 78.

On June 30, 2017, my life changed in an instant. I was at our family cabin at Quartz Lake when a swing collapsed, and I was left paralyzed. I spent a month in the ICU at Providence Alaska Medical Center and three months at Craig Hospital for spinal cord rehabilitation. I returned home to Alaska as a C5/6 quadriplegic.

While in rehab, I began looking into what disability protection I had through the Teacher Retirement System. I learned that before I was hired, Tier 3 disability benefits had been changed to occupational-only coverage. Because my injury did not happen at work, I was not eligible for disability retirement. There was no appeal.

Alaska teachers also do not pay into Social Security. I was injured at 34 and did not have the 40 quarters required to qualify for Social Security disability benefits.

So after dedicating my career to Alaska's students, I had no safety net.

I spent seven and a half years cashing out my retirement savings and spending down everything I had just to survive, until I qualified for help through a Medicaid waiver. I worked hard, earned a Master's degree, and served this state — and still ended up financially devastated after a tragic accident.

House Bill 78 is about restoring stability and security for educators. If we want to recruit and retain teachers in Alaska — especially in rural, high-risk, physically demanding environments — we must offer a retirement system that provides real protection.

Passing HB 78 sends a clear message: If you commit your career to Alaska, Alaska will stand behind you.

Please pass House Bill 78 so no other educator finds themselves in my position.

Thank you for your time.

Lindsay Pinkelman
907-505-0023

Doniece Gott

From: Sen. Robert Myers
Sent: Sunday, March 01, 2026 12:56 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: FW: Public Testimony - HB 78 / SB 28: A return to impoverished DBs

Senator Robert Myers

From: Scott Hummel <scotthummel86@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 1, 2026 10:08 AM
To: Sen. Scott Kawasaki <Sen.Scott.Kawasaki@akleg.gov>; Rep. Will Stapp <Rep.Will.Stapp@akleg.gov>; Rep. Frank Tomaszewski <Rep.Frank.Tomaszewski@akleg.gov>; Rep. Ashley Carrick <Rep.Ashley.Carrick@akleg.gov>; Rep. Maxine Dibert <Rep.Maxine.Dibert@akleg.gov>; Sen. Robert Myers <Senator.Robert.Myers@akleg.gov>; Rep. Mike Prax <Rep.Mike.Prax@akleg.gov>; Sen. Mike Cronk <Sen.Mike.Cronk@akleg.gov>; Rep. Rebecca Schwanke <Rep.Rebecca.Schwanke@akleg.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Public Testimony - HB 78 / SB 28: A return to impoverished DBs

Greetings Interior Delegation!

Here we are again in legislative session, thank you for your service and my prayer is for a productive, low-drama, session.

My name is Scott Hummel, from Fairbanks Senate Seat P / District 32, I represent myself, as a State Employee with 5-years dedication, my wife, as a Public Middle School Music Teacher here in the FNSB-SD with 12-years of dedication, and our confident, curious, and joyous 20-month old baby-girl, Natalie.

I wanted to supply you my below Public Testimony regarding the State of Alaska / Public Sector employee Recruitment and Retention discussion.

Here are the SparkNotes:

- The 'magic bullet of DBs' will not resolve this R&R issue.
- The Segal Salary Study plainly shows that base salaries are *woefully uncompetitive*. OMB estimates \$160M/annually to meet 65th Percentile competitiveness. I understand the pressure this puts on our current budget distress.
- With the 180-day "choice" component of HB78, please equally show support for DC Reform Bills SB55 (Teacher SBS accounts) and SB198 (Reducing 30-yr medical eligibility to 25-yr medical eligibility)
- the ARM Board, recommended, 'default' DC 'TargetDate Funds' are insufficient investment vehicles. Please direct default investments to 'S&P500 Index' and/or expand investment options.
- Pensions will not resolve or entice current Teachers to "tough it out" compared to the stresses of every-day, every-year pressures from society and finances on the job.
- Every year that we do not reform our revenue stream, as assessed / concluded by ISER, i.e. increasing corporate taxes, S-Corp tax loophole, reforming SB21 Oil Tax structure, is another year

our PFD and State Services will struggle. Both my parents and in-laws, placed my wife's and my PFDs into savings/investment accounts for college tuition.

IF you must support HB78 (which is NOT my desire), PLEASE equally support SB55 and SB198. PLEASE find ways to balance the \$160M obligations estimated by OMB to implement the 65th Percentile Segal Salary Study.

Kind Regards,
Scott Hummel, Katrina Hummel, and Natalie Hummel



To Encourage and Be Encouraged



Heb 10:19-25



----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Scott Hummel** <scotthummel86@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Mar 1, 2026 at 8:45 AM
Subject: Public Testimony - HB 78 / SB 28: A return to impoverished DBs
To: <Senate.Finance@akleg.gov>

Greetings Senate Finance Committee Members,

Here we are again in legislative session, thank you for your service and my prayer is for a productive, low-drama, session.

My name is Scott Hummel, from Fairbanks Senate Seat P / District 32, I represent myself, as a State Employee with 5-years dedication, my wife, as a Public Middle School Music Teacher here in the FNSB-SD with 12-years of dedication, and our confident, curious, and joyous 20-month old baby-girl, Natalie.

I would like to speak specifically to the Retention and Retention issue at the heart of HB78/SB28, and **point squarely at the Salary Study which has finally been released. Salaries are 15-45% under the 65th Percentile.** With great respect, I humbly, and plainly state ... that DB offerings will not change our State of Alaska Public Sector Recruitment and Retention issues. We have heard countless Directors, Commissioners, and paid consultants tell us, our salaries are too low. **I also know that the State OMB estimate to implement the 50th percentile of \$93M and the more appropriate 65th Percentile \$160M is likely unrealistic at this time. Which is an incredible travesty.**

As Directors, Commissioners have testified, I will affirm, on the inside, day-to-day operations, State Employee conversations are CONSTANT the hardships created by current take-home salaries. Salary Schedules are too low from Year 0 to Year 30. A pension, calculated AT these low salary rates, will not change our R&R issues. Furthermore, 90% of DC retirement gains come from compound interest accrued through investments. DB plans will transition a great deal of that "unfunded liability" back onto the State. And I need not remind you of our current and future fiscal picture.

As the fictional character Rod Tidwell once entertained us all from classic movie, Jerry McGuire said, "Show me the Money." (It would be nice, right?)

I would like to reach out, again, to speak against this push towards a return to DB as described in HB78 / SB28 by establishing Tier IV / Tier V DBs & pensions. Especially as it is being "heralded as this magic bullet" to solve our retention and recruitment issues.

As stated above, and again for emphasis, State of Alaska Salaries are 15-45% UNDER the 65th Percentiles for Market compensation.

My wife is a third generation, 11-yr music educator, here in the Fairbanks North Star Borough. Her cousins and aunts are also educators. My mother was a teacher. I'm very familiar with the Legacy Tier I/II DB plans. After reviewing HB 78 and listening to the testimony from "retirement security professionals" last year. I can assure you that the lack of a 'modest pension,' as proposed in this DB plan, is NOT the reason my wife and I have an annual discussion about her future as an educator. And vis-a-vis, our residence in our Home State and Community here in the Golden Heart of Alaska.

It is 0-1% annual salary raises, the lack of a matching retirement program, and the mind-blowing increases in medical premiums the District has been offering.

Add to it, this constant budget battle,

- increasing class sizes,
- the transition to digital teaching materials,
- the oppressive Parental/Teacher interactions,
- the additional mandatory testing full-days,
- the ridiculous 8-year budget slashing practice under this Administration as an extension of budget cuts going back nearly 16-years which has created a constant fear of 'which school will be closed next/will I still have a job in this economy,' and
- this cultural phenomenon of student 'infallibility' and District / Administrative deferment to unreasonable 'squeaky-wheel parents.'

I probably don't need to point out that these 16-years of cuts / flat-funding, exceed the 12-years a student might be part of public education.

So much of public testimony and emphasis is that, "there are no, or inadequate retirement benefits" under DC, Tier III / Tier IV State Public Sector employees. This is simply not true. Tier III DC creates an employee mandatory contribution but for some reason unknown to me, omit the state Match / SBS or Social Security contributions. The absence of these additional monetary commitments to public sector teachers is inexplicable. This omission in Teacher DC plans has created the concept that DC plans are inferior to DB plans, and thus the feeling that teachers are poorly supported in existing retirement DC plans.

Current DC plans are not without their faults, as FINALLY SB55 and SB198 are seeking to rectify those issues. Also, the language in Educator DC plans, placing the 'match-funding' ownership on the School-Districts are being neglected by both local governance and likely state governance is ignorant these matches are not being met.

Similar to what Sen. Stedman has offered, in SB55, which will attempt to correct the exclusion of Public Sector Educators into the SBS plans, with a State Match. These State Matches are a very much an important component to ensuring a secure and comfortable retirement as a reward for years of Public

Service. And Sen. Kaufman's offering in SB198 reducing the medical eligibility AT NO PROJECTED COST to the State should be a no-brainer, enticement.

Specifically, I would like share that my wife, who is a public educator, until recently was completely unaware of the SOA DC Empower Tier III retirement Empower account. I feel like the quick once-over education/orientation by the Unions to the existence of this account is specifically biasing the narrative. The State or Unions need to include mandatory introductions for Public Sector employess, through the Empower management professionals, to introduce them adequately to this DC retirement plan. **The real crime of these Mandatory DC plans, are the default use of "TargetDate Funds" which under-perform comparable market plans (producing 4-10% over the life of the funds), and all but guarentee a "retirement in poverty," similar to pension plans at 15-45% under 65th Market pay salaries, especially in this inflationary period.**

Through either decree by the ARM Board or some other Div RnB directive from the Commissioner/Director, a simple change of these accounts to the S&P500 Index fund, could result in 12-24% returns. Yes, it is true, the market is volatile, it is true there may be down or flat years, as we saw recently in 2022; however, averaging returns over any 15-year interval nets a +12% return. Far improved from the "Retirement Security" professionals claiming 8% and using these TargetDate Funds as their comparative performance indices.

Finally, much of this emphasis of HB78 is touts the 180 day "current employee choice" between DC / DB. **IF my testimony doesn't sway you from support / wishes / belief in DB plans; I would firmly implore that you equally support amendments to DC plans found in SB55, SB198 to give DC members A FAIR, and HONEST evaluation of their options for retirement here in the Great State of Alaska,**

Please pass SB55, SB198, and do what you can to implement the Segal State Salary Study. I know the difficulty of this ask in which State Salaries are made competitive as identified in the 2023 Salary Study ... but these steps are what it will take to make Alaska Competitive and Desirable as an employer and actually move the needle on Recruitment and Retention.

Lastly, both of our sets of parents, placed our PFDs into accounts for our college tuitions at UAF. The Executive/Legislative inability to implement simple, common-sense revenue measures, as identified by ISER, on Corporations and reforms of SB21 Oil Taxes is adversely impacting Alaskans today, and tomorrow.

Thank you,
Scott Hummel, Sen A / House 32
907-590-4677



To Encourage and Be Encouraged



Heb 10:19-25



Doniece Gott

From: larafahnlander@gmail.com
Sent: Sunday, March 01, 2026 1:09 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Testimony on HB 78, please record & share at the hearing.

As you consider whether or not to improve teacher conditions under HB 78, please realize you are missing many important voices. The voices of all the teacher who had to leave AK to get decent options that are afforded to every other state. Every other state grants either access to social security or a defined pension. Without these basics, teachers like me are left without a safety net when faced with the impossible. Alaska was my first professional teaching position, I dedicated my life, my weekends, my evenings for the betterment of my students for over 10 years, (unlike Rep. Showers proclamation, many people are happy to have a long, safe career in a lovely state). But when I was suddenly diagnosed with cancer graded level 3C and rushed to immediate surgery, I learned the hard way that Alaska does not protect its teachers. I was told by the federal government that I wasn't eligible for social security medical disability because I had worked as an Alaskan teacher too long and wasn't allowed to partake in the social security system. Then I was told by the state of Alaska that I wasn't eligible for medical care through the state because I was a tier 3 teacher, having started after 2006, instead of before. I was unable to work, facing death, told I had 12-14 mths to live and on top of all that had to realize I had fallen off a cliff of no support because I had chosen teaching children in a Alaska as my career. Alaska is a wonderful place, but I now warn every person I meet not to let any of their loved ones become a teacher in Alaska. Until you pass this bill, Alaska will be the sole state unwilling to value and protect their teachers in a way that every other state has provided. Please don't drop anymore people off the cliff that I am forced to endure. Please see your way to right and decency for the staff that is caring for the children that will shape the future of our majestic Alaska.

Please help,
Lara Fahnlander
Former Teacher in Alaska
starting in 2007- ending in 2023
Left due to insufficient protection

Doniece Gott

From: K S <kelly_sheffer@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 01, 2026 1:27 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Cc: Matthew Moser
Subject: 3/2 Testimony: Pensions support Alaska's growth, economy, and quality of life

Senate Finance Committee,

Currently, Alaska has the worst teacher turnover AND the worst teacher retirement system in the 50 United States of America.

Modest pensions for public service workers can stabilize the workforce needed for public safety, education, and an overall better quality of life for residents.

Anchorage has a public safety crisis - individuals with unsafe behavior in public, shoplifting, shootings, pedestrian deaths, people dying from exposure, public parks where most of the public would not feel safe. Anchorage has a housing crisis with rents increasing 70% or more in the last 5 years and home prices skyrocketing. Groceries, health care, transportation costs are more expensive in Alaska than in the lower 48. How can Alaska attract and retain middle class families under these circumstances?

When my son turned 5, I moved to Anchorage so he could have a quality education with small classes, adequate trained staff, and beautiful school buildings that were well-supplied. I went through a rigorous interview process and received an offer for an Anchorage teaching position that paid 20% more than I was getting in my home state. My family of four rented a condo in a safe area for 1/3 of my monthly pay. My son entered a kindergarten class with 18 students and 3 adults. I used to love walking the Anchorage trail system with my two young children.

Over the next decade, class sizes grew, rent increased to 50% of my monthly pay, healthcare costs increased, portions of the trail system became unsafe for moms and young kids. The experienced teachers I relied upon for advice all retired with pensions. Now with 18 years teaching in public schools, I can see that my salary is covering less and less of my monthly expenses. I have no pension and I don't look forward to a dignified retirement. My fellow teachers are often parents to kids in Anchorage schools, and many of them are considering leaving Alaska for better pay and retirement options. Worse than this is that I had to pull my youngest child from our neighborhood school due to inadequate staffing and overburdened school administrators who actively try to push families out.

Please give experienced teachers reasons to remain in Alaska with their families! Teachers and other public servants who have modest pensions will stay in their positions and build Alaska's economy. Recruitment and turnover are expensive, offering pensions makes sense financially to retain qualified public workers and their families. Our education system is struggling - pensions would recruit and retain staff who will enroll their children in public schools. Pensions will help fill gaps among staff addressing public safety: police, fire fighters, medical staff, prosecutors, etc. Pensions will bring more families to Alaska to live and work. Pensions will keep more families in Alaska to build our community and our economy.

Sincerely,

Kelly Sheffer

Parent
Public School Teacher

Doniece Gott

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Sincerely,

Kelly Sheffer

Parent
Public School Teacher

Doniece Gott

From: Sosnowski, Ari J (DEC) <ari.sosnowski@alaska.gov>
Sent: Sunday, March 01, 2026 2:11 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: HB 78 - Support for Pensions

Hello,

I am unable to call in to provide testimony at the 1:30 p.m. hearing tomorrow. However, I strongly support pensions for public employees in Alaska. Educators are continuing to leave the State as Alaska offers teachers either a defined benefit pension or participation in Social Security. After 20 years of the unsuccessful Defined Contribution system, it is time to restore pensions for our public servants.

Thank you,



Arianna Sosnowski

Engineering Associate 1

Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation

555 Cordova St, Anchorage, AK 99501

Phone: (907) 269-5180

Email: ari.sosnowski@alaska.gov

Doniece Gott

From: Pepper McFarland <pmcfarland907@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 01, 2026 6:22 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee; House Finance
Subject: Defined Benefits.

Please watch my video. I encourage you to return to a defined benefits retirement plan and get folks back on social security.



Thank you,
Pepper McFarland
North Pole
907 378 0061
Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Melany Wilson <wheresmelany@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 01, 2026 9:19 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support HB 78

Dear Members of the Alaska Senate,

As a dedicated State of Alaska employee, I urge you to support HB 78 and reinstate a defined benefit pension for public employees. Since the pension was eliminated in 2006, our state has faced an ongoing recruitment and retention crisis. Agencies are chronically understaffed, experienced employees are leaving, and many of us are doing the work of multiple positions just to keep essential services running.

Alaska cannot remain strong without a stable, experienced workforce. Competitive retirement benefits are not a luxury—they are a necessary tool to attract and retain qualified professionals who are committed to serving our communities long-term. We are currently the only state in the nation without a public pension system, which places us at a serious disadvantage in recruiting and keeping talent.

Reinstating a defined benefit pension will not only strengthen public service but also boost Alaska's economy. When employees can plan for retirement with confidence, they are more likely to build their careers—and their lives—here. That means stronger families, more stable communities, and long-term economic growth.

Please pass HB 78 and take this critical step toward restoring stability, dignity, and sustainability to Alaska's public workforce.

Respectfully,

Melany Wilson

Doniece Gott

From: Whitelos <whitelos@aol.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 01, 2026 9:28 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Pensions for Public Service!

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

I support the Public Employees Retirement Pension system that has been proposed. Cathy Giessel put together a presentation about Alaska public employees pensions that included a lot of research and asked teachers a lot of questions. The conclusion was clear that no pension for Alaskan teachers means they are all too often 'tourist teachers'. The presentation outlined the large cost to rehire, retrain and replace teachers not to mention the 'cost' to students having teachers rotating through their school every couple of years. My family has been involved in public education in Alaska for about 40 years. In the Tier 1 pension days teachers were committed, happy and productive with a plan for their career and retirement. They stayed 20 years and then as promised retired with a guaranteed pension. Why did this system change to a savings account with no pension? There was some bad management that made the pension system look unsustainable. That company is no longer in charge of Alaskan pensions. Also, financial companies saw this as a way to increase their business with retirement funds that needed to be managed for each employee. I am an Alaskan teacher of 20 years and while I have been saving as best I can into the public school employees fund it is a long road to save enough to be ready for retirement. I support the sustainable pension plan that has been proposed with employees having the option to switch to a pension or not. That solves any concerns and gets Alaska back on the right track to attract committed teachers.

Thank you for your time.
Janet Balice
1102 E 4th St. PO 2106
Nome, Alaska 99762
whitelos@aol.com

Doniece Gott

From: Cliff Wilson <cliffordwilson@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 01, 2026 9:37 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Please, need a defined benefit pension that retains state workers.

Dear Members of the Alaska Senate,

I am writing as the spouse of a dedicated State of Alaska employee to urge you to support HB 78 and reinstate a defined benefit pension for public employees.

I see firsthand the level of commitment, long hours, and responsibility that Alaska's public employees carry to keep our state running. Since the pension was eliminated in 2006, recruitment and retention challenges have only grown worse. Positions remain vacant, experienced employees leave for other states with better retirement security, and those who stay are often stretched thin doing the work of multiple roles. This is not sustainable for families or for Alaska.

A defined benefit pension is not an extravagant perk — it is a foundational tool for attracting and retaining skilled professionals who choose to build their careers and raise their families here. Alaska is now the only state in the nation without a public pension system, putting us at a clear disadvantage. If we want strong schools, safe roads, reliable infrastructure, and stable public services, we must offer competitive and dependable benefits.

Reinstating a pension will help keep experienced workers in Alaska, strengthen families, and contribute to long-term economic stability. When public employees can confidently plan their futures here, they invest in their communities — and that investment strengthens our entire state.

Please support HB 78 and take this important step toward restoring stability and strength to Alaska's public workforce.

Respectfully,

Cliff wilson
Anchorage, ak

Doniece Gott

From: Amanda Zogas <angus119@msn.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 01, 2026 9:47 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Please Pass HB 78

Dear Alaskan Senators,

It is vital that you pass HB 78. Vital not just for the workers in AK PERS 4 and AK TERS 3, but also vital for the people who depend on the services provided by those workers: firemen, police officers, and teachers. Where will our state be without competent, knowledgeable, and dedicated public servants in these positions?

I'll tell you where. I was just reflecting with my colleagues about the students we've been teaching the last handful of years compared to those we saw at the beginning of our careers (18 years for me). We've noticed a slow but steady decrease in their skills as they enter our high school classrooms. We just connected the dot that the students we've seen in the last three years have come mainly from a feeder school where long-term subs have been running the English classrooms. The students entering our classes are lacking necessary skills. Studies show knowledgeable, long-term teachers have the biggest influence on student success in the classroom. Yet multiple positions across the state, let alone ASD, where I teach, go unfilled every year. And that number increases every year. Any guesses as to why?

I'm a Tier 3 teacher, suffering with the worst "retirement plan" in the nation, since the State of Alaska so wonderfully opted me out of social security and has given me instead a defined contribution program with no backstop should the market fall. I don't know if you've seen the recent op-ed by two of Alaska's greatest teachers, Ben and Cat Walker. If you haven't, you must read it. They said it all more eloquently than I can. In short, they are leaving the state because they can't afford to stay between the lack of real funding for education and the current excuse for a real retirement program, the DC plan. More and more teachers are leaving every year - and no one is coming to replace them. It's sad for those of us in this career to say goodbye to our dedicated, hardworking, and passionate colleagues, but do you know who really bears the brunt of this impact? Students. Students like my 11 year old son, who was supposed to have Mr. Walker next year at Romig Middle School.

Changing the DC plan to a defined benefit one is a no-brainer. Actuarial studies have shown this change will not cost the state more money. The shared risk policies that increase employee contributions in times of funding shortfalls make this a smart financial choice for the state. Retirement income that is stable, predictable, and guaranteed will go a long way to lessening the outflow of talented public servants from the state. Students will gain by being in classrooms with talented educators who want to stay in this great state.

Please act today. Show that you value public servants in Alaska. We can't wait any longer.

Thank you,
Amanda Zogas

Doniece Gott

From: Heather Riggelsen <heather.riggelsen@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 01, 2026 10:37 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Pensions for Public Service!

Hello!

As an employee of the MSBSD I have substituted, been a recess monitor, am currently a special education assistant and am finishing my Master's in Special Education with the intention of teaching. The choice to go into public education has been filled with conversations about the drawbacks. From the lack of Social Security to the stress load for the pay and the rising cost of benefits, the lack of retirement has also been a huge drawback for me. Even with a Master's, my salary could not provide a living wage for my family, and to be honest if my husband wasn't doing well with his business I wouldn't even be able to consider it as a career. Teachers spend their heart, soul, and way too much of their own money trying to give their students the best they can. If we want to keep quality educators, we must show them they are valuable by providing a defined benefit pension. The future of our state is in our children, and they are hanging in the balance. Please find a way.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Heather Riggelsen

Doniece Gott

From: Kerry Clark <kerry.clark@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 01, 2026 10:42 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: In favor of HB78

I am writing in support of HB78 Defined Benefits/Retirement

I agree with the intent to create a more stable and secure retirement system for public employees.

Alaska's public employees deserve to have stability and Alaskans deserve to have a reliable workforce.

Thank you,
Kerry Clark
8050 Summerset Dr
99518

Doniece Gott

From: Spencer Fullmer <fullmer_spencer@hotmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 01, 2026 11:14 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: HB 78 & Teachers Needs your Help

Dear Senate Finance Members,

My name is Spencer Fullmer and I was born and raised in the Eagle River area. I still live here with my family of 6. I am a third generation teacher and currently in my 9th year with the Anchorage School District which puts me along side many other Tier 3 teachers. We are a single income family with 4 little kids. The financial side of being a teacher has always been a struggle. I love teaching but I am starting to come to a cross roads in my teaching career that only the State of Alaska can fix if I am remain in this profession.

All my life, I have heard the stories my family share about all the great experiences that come along from teaching. I was also warned not to become a teacher because of the current retirement system. In my 9 years, I have seen the great moments teaching brings as well. It is a wonderful thing to see the great good that teachers can do to help our rising generation, but the time has come that financial burdens have outweighed all the good that comes from being a teaching. Retiring as an educator is more of an imaginary thought/dream than reality. Every year, I consider if this is the time I need to start looking for another career path that will provide the financial stability I need for our future.

I am so grateful for HB 78 and for Representative Chuck Kopp speaking on the importance and significance of HB 78 a few weeks ago. HB 78 is my last hope to retire as an educator. The current retirement for tier 3 members is nowhere near adequate in providing a real retirement. Each year my tier 1 and tier 2 coworkers are retiring and along with that their experience and knowledge leave too. As for the tier 3 members, I have had countless number of coworkers leave the teaching field or the state for better opportunities. For experienced teachers to remain in Alaska, things need to change. I urge you to vote to pass HB 78 before more and more great teachers leave and our students and future Alaskans have to deal with the consequences. A pension will bring new teachers to Alaska and will allow those who love to teach to remain in this beautiful state. The time to act is now! Thank you for your service and taking time to read and learn about the significance of HB 78. Our state desperately needs the stability HB 78 brings to our education system. We need the long-term solutions HB 78 brings.

Thanks,
Spencer Fullmer

Doniece Gott

From: Pamela Lloyd <pamela.lloyd5@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 02, 2026 6:59 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: HB 78 YES

Dear Senators,

Alaska must restore pensions for public service to retain educators and public workers.

We are bleeding out qualified educators and teachers. A 2017 ISER study put turnover costs at \$20,000 per teacher. This hurts students and our community.

I am a retired Occupational Therapist who worked in public schools for 27 years. Without my defined benefit I doubt I would have stayed longer than five years. I would have taken my matching 503b funds and found a different job.

Please return to a defined benefit to save our state.

Thank you for your service,

Pamela Lloyd
30238 White Spruce Av
Sterling, AK. 99672
907-262-6007

Doniece Gott

From: Sherry Eckrich <seckrich2@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 02, 2026 7:08 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: HB78

Recruitment and retention of state workers is being seriously affected by the lack of a defined-contribution plan for retirement. As noted by a Teacher of the Year in the Anchorage Daily News yesterday, seasoned workers cannot afford to remain in the state. Recruiting and training new ones is costly.

Passing this bill will not create any unfunded liability. Even an analysis by the state verifies this. In the long run, it will save money.

Please pass this bill.

Sherry Eckrich
18514 Olivia Drive
Eagle River, AK 99577
Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Beth E. <skinordicak@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 02, 2026 7:10 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: HB78

Hello,

I am writing to express my support for HB78. Alaska desperately needs a better retirement system for state employees. We are losing hard working employees to the private sector due to higher pay and other states that offer pensions. A stable highly functional government staffed with the best employees is critical to keeping Alaska a state where people want to live and work.

Thank you,
Beth Elliott

Doniece Gott

From: Michael Bronson <bronsonconsulting@gci.net>
Sent: Monday, March 02, 2026 7:11 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Lower the barriers for more teachers. Give them better benefits like other states.

Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Axl LeVan <axllevan@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 02, 2026 8:11 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Cc: Rep. Ashley Carrick; Sen. Mike Cronk
Subject: Pension Plans for Public Employees

Good morning,

Unfortunately I have overlapping meetings as a state worker and will not be able to take time off to call during the hearing on HB78. This opinion is only my own and I am representing myself I am a lifelong Alaska beside leaving for college and am glad to be able to serve my community as a public employee. This is not the first time I've encouraged the legislature to reinstate a defined benefit. As a student who graduated highschool in 2013 I witnessed the beginning of the decline of long term strong teachers as some of our best new teachers left for states with pension plans. I had many 15-25 years of experience teachers that came or stayed in Alaska because of our defined benefits and it payed off in the skills they brought.

I experienced similar employees when I worked as a weir tech at fish and game as a highschooler! Without the guarantee of a protected future retirement the drawbacks to public service (such as pay) begin to make less sense. It is clear looking at all the other states that have returned to defined benefits that it is time for the state to also.

I have many other defenses for this particular bill but my understanding of its strength is that the liability is better shared. I would also like to say that many of the "failures" of the previous defined benefits were made by actuarial mistakes rather than a specific failure of the defined benefits.

Lastly. I would ask that you consider as much as possible increasing the benefits of the proposed plans. One that seems worth pursuing is the 10% boost for remaining in alaska that other plans see. I see that as an appropriate use of money that will mostly stay in state.

Thank you,
Axl

Doniece Gott

From: JULIA HAMMAN <Julia.Hamman@matsuk12.us>
Sent: Monday, March 02, 2026 8:24 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Pensions+for+Public+Service!

Dear Members of the Finance Senate Committee, March 2, 2026

My name is Julia Hamman and I am writing about the Alaska Senate Bill 78, concerning the retirement of our teachers here in Alaska. I have been teaching in one of the highest performing schools in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District for over 15 years. In our district, we have three tiers for our retirees. I plan to retire here, however, the Tier III retirement plan does not support the cost of living, nor make sense. Tier II retirees earn a pension that is approximately half of what they earn while teaching. Tier III don't even get that; they are entirely dependent on their own ability to invest while earning among the lowest wages of any professional.

Not only do Tier III earn the least, but we provide greater support to students as behavioral issues persist and technology alters the development of children's knowledge on a daily basis. We serve as counselors, social workers, emotional regulators, negotiators, and de-escalators, along with our daily teaching tasks. These tasks are growing year by year as well with less help, less funding, and higher needs from students and families. However, that is a topic for another discussion.

Teachers are public servants. Not only do we care for the youth of America, but we also strive to provide the best for students and their families. All professions originate from teaching. Legislators: you are where you are because of educators. People making important decisions for others came from people who had pride and hard work in what they did for children.

Why would a sufficient pension for an educator even be in question? Why wouldn't the retirement of teachers be the largest retirement amount in the United States? Teachers shape and mold youth. They set aside their own biases and opinions to support others. They often return home exhausted and depleted; burdened by their responsibilities for other families. Educators should retire with a pension that surpasses their current salary. We as educators should feel secure in our retirement years.

Working for the community requires a unique individual to deliver the care, love, and support that teachers provide. While we all have had both positive and negative experiences with teachers, we always remember those who helped shape us as individuals and made us feel good about ourselves.

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 78 and urge you to decide in helping secure the futures of men and women who have loved and supported children and families for years who want to keep Alaska their home in their retirement years. I urge you as men and women in very important, decision-making positions, to do the right thing for people who have strived to do the right thing for others year after year. Thank you for considering this investment in Alaska's future.

Julia Hamman

Doniece Gott

From: searoad2@msn.com
Sent: Monday, March 02, 2026 8:50 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: HB78 Defined Benefits/Retirement

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I strongly believe that is time to make the retirement system more stable and secure for public employees; specially when the turnover due to the lack of increasing wages and defined contributions reflect the inflation rate disparity.

Please, support HB78!

Respectfully,
Adriana Bryan

Doniece Gott

From: Clare Foster <clarefoster@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 02, 2026 9:06 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Public Testimony for HB 78

Dear Senate Finance Committee Members,

I am here to urge you to vote for the HB 78 Bill for a pension plan for public employees. My name is Clare and I have been an Alaskan educator for 18 years.

I was hired just two months too late to qualify for the previous retirement system. For nearly two decades, I have poured my energy into Alaska's students, 15 years at one school in Anchorage and the last three at my current placement. I am a math teacher and an enthusiastic Career and Technical Education leader. I set a high standard for myself and for my students because I believe deeply in the power of public education.

But today, I am here not just as a teacher, I am here as a parent and sole provider.

The lack of a stable retirement plan has been haunting me for years. It weighs even heavier now as I raise my two children on a single income, with only modest retirement savings and no long-term security. I have dedicated my professional life to this state and the education of Alaska's children, yet I cannot confidently say the state of Alaska has provided a secure future in return to the educators that commit careers to Alaska's future.

And that leaves me with a difficult question: Why stay?

HB 78 represents more than policy. For me and many like me, it means stability and respect for our commitment, and the possibility to retain educators who have already proven their dedication to Alaska's children.

If passed, HB 78 would provide the security I need to confidently return every year and continue serving my district. It would give educators like me a reason to build our futures here, rather than look elsewhere. It would help Alaska retain qualified teachers to provide institutional knowledge, instructional leadership, and consistency for students.

Give us a reason to remain committed to Alaska's classrooms. Passing HB 78 shows support of educators and the future of the state through educating our children.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Clare

Doniece Gott

From: Dan Logan <dmlogan@seanile.biz>
Sent: Monday, March 02, 2026 9:12 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: HB 78 (Defined Benefit) Public Testimony

I'm Dan Logan, Soldotna AK and I have worked for the Kenia Peninsula Borough (KPB) for the last 5 years.

I would like to see a Defined Benefit for public employees and believe it is a method to stop the 28% plus annual turnover KPB has experienced. This turnover keeps the "tribal knowledge/experience" level at a level that creates more costs due to learning and relearning mistakes of the past.

A defined benefit would be affordable if moneys were properly spent within the state/borough.

Doniece Gott

From: Mel LeVan <mlevan907@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 02, 2026 9:18 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Pension Plans for Public Employees

Good morning,

I am a lifelong Alaskan born in Seward, Alaska the year of statehood and a thirty year retired high school teacher and Principal all at Kodiak High School. I am currently living in Kodiak and enjoying the benefits of my pension along with the added 10% cost of living increase since I turned 65 years old. I am emailing to show my support of HB78 so that new generations will be able to work knowing they have the security of a good pension once they retire.

Mel LeVan
PO Box 8676 Kodiak, Ak 99615
mlevan907@gmail.com
907-539-8234
Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Melodie Wright <rewrighter@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 02, 2026 9:24 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: HB 78

To the senate finance committee:

I'm writing in support of HB 78. My husband and I are PERS and TERS respectively and we have worked in public service for 15 years.

We appreciate your vote giving us - and our daughter, who is also a new teacher - the choice of enrolling in a pension plan. Without this, we plan on leaving the state after next school year. At that point, my daughter will be vested and plans to move to Washington state. Our son is already leaving this year. Without our kids in state - and no financial incentive to stay - it's a better deal for us to migrate out.

If a pension plan isn't passed, please consider opening Social Security up to teachers. It's extremely unfair that we can't pay in yet do not have SBS like PERS does. Please also realize that, since 2006, teachers have missed out on all those years of averaging for SS benefits. Compensation must be paid to be fair because none of us can recapture that time.

Thanks for your service,
Melodie Wright
Palmer, AK

Doniece Gott

From: Gary Miller <gmiller.juneauak@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 02, 2026 9:37 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: HB 78

I support HB 78, Retirement System Defined Benefit. Most states and the federal government have defined benefit plans. Social Security is a “defined benefit plan”. Alaska departments complain it is difficult to hire people. A defined benefit plan would help with both hiring and retention.

Please vote yes when it comes before you.

Thank you.

Gary Miller
20135 Cohen Dr
Juneau, AK 99801-8211
(907) 789-3757

Doniece Gott

From: Schubert, Hendrik <HSchubert@kpb.us>
Sent: Monday, March 02, 2026 9:44 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Public Testimony on HB 78

Public Testimony on HB 78

Presented by: **Hendrik Schubert, President, KBEA Local 6140**

Committee: Senate Finance Committee

Date: 03.02.2026

Chair and Members of the Committee:

Good morning/afternoon. My name is Hendrik Schubert, and I proudly serve as President of **KBEA Local 6140** — representing dedicated public employees who serve the Kenai Peninsula Borough every day.

I am here today in **strong support of HB 78**, which would create a **new tier of defined benefit (DB) pension within the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS)**, giving current and future employees the choice between a DB pension and the current defined contribution (DC) plan.

Alaska has been one of the few states without a meaningful pension option for educators and public servants. After the defined benefit plan was closed to new employees in 2006, workers were moved into a defined contribution system one that provides virtually no guaranteed retirement security. Under this system, employees are often tied to their accounts only long enough to vest, and then turnover rates spike as workers leave for stronger wages in the private sector. Because of these weak retirement benefits, Alaska struggles to retain experienced public employees, creating instability in our schools and communities.

We believe HB 78 is a necessary step toward real retirement security, improved recruitment, and long-term workforce stability in Alaska. A defined benefit tier:

- **Provides predictable retirement income** that is not solely dependent on volatile markets — giving employees and their families peace of mind after decades of service.
- **Strengthens recruitment and retention** by offering a retirement benefit competitive with lower 48 states and the private sector. Many prospective employees decline public service roles because the current retirement plan cannot provide the stability they need for their future.
- **Encourages career longevity in Alaska**, ensuring that experienced, committed educators and public workers stay in our state rather than leaving for jobs with stronger retirement benefits.
- **Honors the principle of public service**, recognizing that careers dedicated to serving the public deserve more than a portable retirement account — they deserve a system that reflects long-term contribution to our communities.

Critics have raised concerns about fiscal impacts. We respect the Legislature's duty to be fiscally responsible, and HB 78 contains provisions that **limit added liability**, including contribution rates tied to

actuarial conditions. However, the risk of **doing nothing** — continuing to lose experienced workers and accruing higher recruitment and training costs — also has a fiscal consequence for the state.

Public employees are at the heart of Alaska’s villages, towns, and cities — teaching our children, protecting our communities, and providing essential services. They deserve a retirement plan that reflects that commitment.

For the future of Alaska’s public workforce — and for the long-term strength of our schools and local services — I urge you to **support HB 78** and pass it out of committee.

Thank you for your consideration.

Hendrik Schubert

Maintenance Technician - Control Systems

Maintenance

Office: (907) 262-4011



Kenai Peninsula Borough, Poppy Lane
47140 East Poppy Lane, Soldotna, AK 99669
kpb.us

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Doniece Gott

From: Shonti Elder <shontielder@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 02, 2026 9:46 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: State Pensions

As a retired Tier II teacher, I was lucky to have a defined benefit at all.

I understand that in the past, the state commitment to pensions was not understood and ended up with a huge unfunded commitment.

The new proposed pension plan is much more fiscally responsible. You would know the amount being committed.

It's completely unfair for current teachers, police and fire fighters to have no real pension after years of dedication, and even risking their lives for their jobs. Other states benefit from having less turnover, and a longer termed workforce.

Please seriously consider this new pension plan.

Thank you.

Shonti Elder

Wasilla

Doniece Gott

From: Donna Knutson <donnaknuts@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 02, 2026 9:49 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: HB78

Please support this bill. Teachers cannot afford to remain in Alaska without a defined benefit program. They are not being unreasonable. They have to provide for their retirement and their families like everyone else.

Sincerely,

Donna Knutson
Girdwood AK

Doniece Gott

From: Mica Night <micanight@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 02, 2026 10:09 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support of HB 78

Hello Senate Finance Committee,

I am a 40-year-old lifelong Alaskan working in PERS for the Anchorage School District.

I support HB 78 and Pensions for public service.

A strong retirement system means stronger communities.

Stronger communities mean a stronger Alaska.

Thank you for considering my written testimony.

Mica Night,
Anchorage School District employee
ACE Union board member
Life-long Alaskan