

**From:** [Jamie Burgess](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Support for SB88 - Retirement Systems, Defined Benefit Option  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 1:00:56 PM

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Dear Committee Members -

I am writing you today to support Senate Bill 88, which would restore the defined benefit option for public employees, including teachers.

I personally am an educator who is negatively impacted by the lack of a defined benefit retirement option for teachers. Education is my second profession, and working in Alaska now will reduce any social security benefit I will receive upon retirement. In addition, Alaska is the only state which does not currently offer some sort of defined benefit option for public service employees. I moved here eight years ago and like so many, the move was supposed to be short-term, but instead I fell in love with this beautiful state and my adopted community and extended my stay. However, unless there is a defined benefit option available to me soon, I will have to leave Alaska and return to the lower 48, where I have a vested defined benefit in the previous state where I worked for 12 years as a teacher and administrator, because I am very concerned about the retirement benefit here.

Teachers are paid less on average than other professionals with a similar education level, and many have been willing to accept that lower pay for the pension available. However, here in Alaska, the lack of a defined pension makes teaching an even less attractive option, exacerbating the current decline of new teachers entering the profession, and accelerating the decisions of many current teachers to leave Alaska, or the professional altogether.

The teacher shortage is also driving an administrator shortage, and we need both high quality teachers and administrators to provide the best possible environment for our students and schools.

I encourage you to support SB88. There are ways to structure the pension system intelligently to minimize the risk to the state and maximize the benefits to our professional public servants.

Thank you for your time.

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Thanks.

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