



## **Representative Jennifer Johnston Sponsor Statement**

### **House Bill 224 "Reemployment of Retired Teachers and Administrators"**

Alaska's school districts are facing staffing challenges. Currently, Alaska is experiencing a shortage of qualified and experienced educators, especially in remote communities. As state budgets continue to be reduced due to the precipitous drop in oil price, it is important that districts are given tools to hire qualified, appropriate educators, even during challenging times.

This bill will allow school districts to re-employ educators who are retired for six months if the educator is younger than age 62 or for 60 days if the educator is aged 62 years or older. Effectively this will allow school districts to temporarily fill vacancies with qualified retired teachers until a permanent teacher is hired.

Educators who are re-employed under these new allowances will continue to receive retirement benefits during the period of reemployment. School districts will be required to contribute 12.56 percent of base salary rate to the Teachers Retirement System, the same rate that districts contribute for active employees

House Bill 224 provides one more tool for local school districts to hire the best and brightest while trying to balance their own budgets. Please give your thoughtful consideration to this bill that will give more flexibility to Alaska's school districts.