
From: CHRISTEL PETTY [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 07, 2025 10:47 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: HB 78 Public Employee Retirement System

I support a Public Retirement System. I am a former State Employee, One of the reasons I went to work for the State is because of the security it offered. Pension, Healthcare etc. Right now there is no incentive to keep working for the state.

Christel Petty

From: Christy McMurren [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 07, 2025 8:24 AM
To: House Finance; Rep. Alyse Galvin; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson
Subject: HB 78. defined benefit

I'm writing to urge you to establish a defined benefit retirement for our state workers. it is costing the state a lot of money to hire people, train them and then they leave because there's no retirement that they can get elsewhere. We are losing very talented people and not attracting qualified people to work in our state gov't. It's penny wise and pound foolish. At some point, you are going to have to face the fact that we cannot afford to have nice things unless you come up with new sources of revenue. it is worth paying taxes to make this happen.

Christy McMurren
Anchorage

From: Brenda Loughman <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, April 07, 2025 8:08 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: House Bill 78

Good morning,
Please vote yes on House Bill 78.

I am a retired teacher who moved to Alaska as a young adult in 1994 and have benefited from the retirement system that was in place at that time. This was one of the reasons that I left my teaching job in Washington and moved to Alaska.

I am now a board member of a charter school and am involved in the hiring of both teachers and administrators. There is a change: we have fewer people applying, we have fewer people applying from out of state. There is also a trend for people not to stay and they state the lack of retirement as a reason for leaving.

My daughter was born in Alaska, went off to college and has returned to teach here. Even though her and her husband have good jobs in their chosen careers, they are planning on moving to Oregon because their jobs do not help them in planning for a secure future. Our experienced principal has been here for five years and loves his job and Alaska but has no reason to stay because of the current retirement plan.

Not only is this good for individuals, but it is also good for schools and our communities, and it makes economic sense.

Please vote yes on House Bill 78 to improve our schools and our communities and our state.

Brenda Loughman
[REDACTED]
Ketchikan, AK 99901

From: Melody Russo [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 06, 2025 7:58 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: HB 78 and BSA

Dear Committee Members,
I am providing my opinion as requested by Ms. Heidi Drygas.

I do not think there is enough good reason, unless the State of Alaska gets a fundamental boost in their economic balance sheet on the 'black' side for the State to consider this option (return to Defined Benefit), especially for 'chair sitter' jobs that Local 52 represents. There are more 'life critical' jobs where this enhancement to recruitment and retention would be of actual benefit. What I would suggest is that the Defined Contribution plans add an option for SELF-DIRECTED investments so that all ROI outcome is not dependent on the traditional investment options (mostly Wall Street), but include precious metals, land, and options where the employee has more comfort with and faith in the investment instruments and the value behind them.

As a related matter, the Legislature needs to follow the statutory formula for PFD, and the finance committee should do the difficult work of cutting out waste and fraud in the budget. Consider doing what Vivek Ramswamy recommended while on the campaign trail as a presidential candidate: start every department at zero and require justification and proof of accountability for meeting expectations (from what they have done with last year's allocation against a set of goals that the Legislature has set)...i.e., why do they exist? A great example are the school districts - I have seen from my job that they are not good stewards of the money they receive, from remote rural districts to large municipal districts. PLEASE DO NOT INCREASE THE BASE STUDENT ALLOCATION.

Respectfully,
Melody Russo

From: Miles Spathelf [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, April 05, 2025 8:30 AM
To: House Finance
Cc: Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Rep. Donna Mears
Subject: Testimony given during 4/4 hearing on HB 78

I noticed that much of the testimony against HB 78 relied on concerns about the market drops and oil prices. If there is trust in President Trump's economic policies then this really should not be a concern and this would be an excellent time to bring back a pension system as the State could invest the money otherwise going to 401k plans and come out ahead. One testifier repeatedly mentioned a return to conservatism and pension plans were a major part of this country's retirement system in the past so I cannot reconcile his viewpoints unless he was being disingenuous. With hiring issues, retention issues, and every other state in this country able to offer pension systems and President Trump's economic policies, doesn't it just make fundamental sense for Alaska to return to a pension system like we had in the past with the economic opportunities before us? Otherwise we still need to compete in the market to recruit new employees with a weak bargaining hand, compared to other states, to obtain the skills needed for our great State. Thank you for your consideration,

Miles Spathelf

From: Allison Mogensen [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 04, 2025 3:38 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Hb78

Please give better retirement benefits to teachers. There is not a shortage of teachers in our state... There is a shortage of people that are willing to work with the most minimal benefits. We can take jobs outside of our teaching career, and many have and more will. Most teachers who retire now (not tier 1 or 2) but tier 3 or lower there is nothing holding us to work in this state. Is horrific. Please give us a liveable retirement.

Thanks you,
Allison Mogensen
Educator

From: Ryan Frost <ryan.frost@reason.org>
Sent: Friday, April 04, 2025 2:57 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Ryan Frost HB78 testimony materials

Testimony: <https://reason.org/testimony/alaska-house-bill-78-would-reopen-defined-benefit-plans-for-public-employees/>

Turnover and Retention: <https://reason.org/commentary/alaska-retaining-public-workers-better-than-most-states/>

I can also provide PDF's if that would be easier.

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Ryan Frost
Managing Director
Pension Integrity Project
Reason Foundation
P: 360.259.4173
E: ryan.frost@reason.org



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 04, 2025 1:39 PM
To: House Finance
Cc: ROBERT M MACNAUGHTON
Subject: testimony in support of hb78 for todays committee

I am a 70 year old, my name is Rob Mac Naughton and my wife and I know the value of a retirement. A fair retirement that you contributed and combined with state contributions is a good value for the state in keeping valued long term employees and retirees and their dollars in the state.

I know the value of competent, decent employees, who provide valuable reliable service to all of us. I support the HB78. In short good reliable, competent and reliable employees need and deserve a fair retirement system that benefits all of us. I think all of us can appreciate a competent dmV employee, DOTPF operator or someone who processes our PFD application. Short term bad decisions now has negative effects for all of us in the long term. Please support the no frills bill that benefits employees and all of us that depend on state services. Thanks, Rob Mac Naughton

From: Martini, Katie F (DOH) <katie.martini@alaska.gov>
Sent: Friday, April 04, 2025 1:29 PM
To: House Finance
Cc: Sen. Löki Tobin; Rep. Zack Fields
Subject: Public testimony in support of HB 78

To the House Finance Committee,

I would like to add my written testimony in support of HB 78.

When employers invest in their workers, we show up with dedication, loyalty, and high-quality work. With SOA salaries hovering well below market rate, an investment toward a dignified retirement would be a significant factor for those deciding whether to work here or not.

From my perspective as a long term non-permanent employee, I currently don't stand to gain anything from this resolution passing. However, the opportunity to secure a pension would be the difference between me staying and working to find a permanent position with the state and me leaving within the next year to find a job that will allow me to save for retirement.

I urge you to support workers and vote in favor of HB 78.

Thank you for your time and consideration,



Katie Martini (she/her)
Publication Specialist 3
Alaska Department of Health
Communications Team
katie.martini@alaska.gov

From: Randi Sweet [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 04, 2025 1:18 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: HB78 - RETIREMENT SYSTEMS; DEFINED BENEFIT OPT. - Support

Dear Co-Chairs Foster and Josephson and Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. As a retiree, I am grateful for having a pension and social security. Even with that it is a scary situation with the financial chaos of today.

I am concerned about my children having financial security for their retirement. They and future generations should have a predictable income in their retirement years.

Having a defined benefit will provide financial security and be a factor in recruiting and retaining public servants.

Please do your best for Alaskans.

Thank you,
Randi Sweet

From: Jerry Herrod <jherrod@whittieralaska.gov>
Sent: Friday, April 04, 2025 12:23 PM
To: House Finance; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Rep. Ted Eischeid
Subject: HB 78

Good Day,

I am writing to state my thoughts on HB 78.

I am currently in the Tier 4 system with no real retirement and no real benefit after I hit the eligible age to "retire". I say "retire" in quotes because it's really not a real retirement. I will have a finite amount of money to survive on and will be forced to take up work after "retirement".

I have invested 15 years of my life to public safety and service to communities here in Alaska. Much of it to my own detriment. I've sustained multiple injuries throughout the course of my career in the line of duty and have made sacrifices for people who are strangers to me, all in the name of service to the community. There is currently no real "light at the end of the tunnel" so to speak, and when I am eligible to "retire" from public civil service I will be forced to take up employment and continue to work a full time job elsewhere well into my golden years just to survive and make ends meet. What is my reward for a dedicated career in public service here in Alaska? What is the reward for others? For other police officers? For firefighters? What's the motivation for people like me to stay here in Alaska and continue to work here when we know full well that we will not have a pension retirement?

I can tell you what the honest motivation is, it's to leave Alaska and seek employment elsewhere in a state where we can use our time in service from Alaska as credit toward the other state's retirement. I can move my 401K Tier 4 from Alaska to another state and enter into their retirement, "buying in" so to speak, with my money from here and retire from the other state and have a real retirement. This is exactly what's happening now. People are working just long enough to get vested in the Tier 4 PERS system and then they leave Alaska and take their money AND their experience with them to go to other states with a real pension style retirement system. This in turn puts public safety and public interest at a constant net loss because there is no benefit to work 20 or 25 years in Alaska and have to continue to work a full-time job afterwards when it's easier to just go to another state.

I have considered this myself, as it would be a benefit for me to take up service elsewhere and move out of my home state of Alaska, work until I retire, then move back later on. In the meantime, the loss goes to the community when they lose a valuable asset to public service and public safety. We cannot continue on a path of revolving door style employment when it comes to public service. We need incentive to keep people in our retirement system and keep them from leaving and going to other states. Anyone who does not believe people are leaving and going to states with better retirement systems would be a fool to think so. Alaska is my home, but I will have to leave to make my retirement and then come back years later. It's unfortunate for people like me. It's easy for those out there who may speak negatively about going back to a pension when they sit on a chair with a gavel on a desk and make decisions that affect the lives of people like me.

The retirement must be changed. People in public service are depending on it. People in public service deserve it.

Officer Jerry Herrod
Whittier Police Department-Servicing Girdwood
660 Whittier St.
PO Box 687
Whittier, Alaska 99693
Office 907-472-2340
Fax 907-472-2344
Email jherrod@whittieralaska.gov

From: Zoe Lowery [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 04, 2025 12:11 PM
To: House Finance
Cc: Rep. David Nelson; Sen. Löki Tobin
Subject: Testimony in support of HB 78

Good morning,

I am writing in support of House Bill 78. I am a state employee with DCCED. State of Alaska employees deserve a better retirement plan. Over the years, it has become a worse and worse deal to work for the state: wages are too low, incoming employees are getting less leave time, and our retirement package gets worse. I like the work that I do, I like my coworkers, and I love Alaska, but without a better retirement plan, I'm planning on going back to school and leaving state for a while. The future feels too uncertain and the 401k is not good enough. I hope you support this bill - State of Alaska employees deserve it.

Thank you for your time,
Zoe Lowery
[REDACTED]
Anchorage, AK 99501

From: Cheryl & Mark Lovegreen [REDACTED] >
Sent: Friday, April 04, 2025 12:04 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: HB 78 written testimony

Dear Committee members,

I am unable to attend the public testimony today for HB 78, but I appreciate your taking up the bill. It is an important part of the solution for many of the problems our state government and school districts are facing.

As you know, public employees have a high turnover, and we experience short staffing across our state. School districts are understaffed as well. Our current defined contribution system is part of the problem, and HB 78 will fix that.

HB 78 is based on a proven retirement system that five states currently use. It shares the risk with employers and employees, and will lead to a \$76 million per year cost savings according to economist Dr. Guillarducci. Most employees prefer a defined benefit system, and HB 78 will help recruit and retain quality employees, restoring our ability to provide public services.

I support this bill. I hope you will pass it and encourage your colleagues to vote for it.

Thanks for your time and service,

Cheryl Lovegreen
Anchorage

From: Jan Carolyn Hardy [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 04, 2025 11:21 AM
To: House Finance
Cc: Kim Hays; Jan Carolyn Hardy
Subject: Testimony for SB 28, HB 78
Attachments: Letter in Support of SB 28, HB 78.doc

Honorable Members of the House Finance Committee,

Please find attached my testimony for today's session. I will be calling in as well.

In Solidarity,

Jan Carolyn Hardy

Tikkun Olam,

Jan Carolyn Hardy

Alaska AFSCME Retiree Chapter 52, Executive Board President

ASEA/AFSCME PAC, Director, District 15

Anchorage Area Central Labor Council, Member

Alaska AFL-CIO, Vice President

Alaskans 4 Posterity, Board Member

[REDACTED]

Theology defines what is possible in our lives. Rabbi Kari Tuling

No one is free until everyone is free. Maya Angelou

Silence is complicity. Joseph R. Biden

Everyone does better when everyone does better. Eleanor Roosevelt

Please spay or neuter your pets!

If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair. Shirley Chisolm

Days are like scrolls: write on them only what you want Remembered. Bachya ibn Pakuda

AM YISRAEL CHAI
The Nation of Israel Lives

Alaska AFSCME Retiree Chapter
PO Box 190942
Anchorage, Alaska 99519

This is Jan Carolyn Hardy, Alaska AFSCME Retiree Chapter President. Just yesterday, our teachers, our state of Alaska public servants, our police, our firefighters lost thousands of dollars in their 403 B retirement accounts. The stock market took a deep dive. Unfortunately, the defined contribution plan is based entirely on the vagaries of the stock market. The expectation that these servants of the people should continue to work in Alaska without a reliable, defined benefit retirement is ludicrous.

Alaska is the only state in the entire United States without a defined benefit retirement in place. No wonder our population is shrinking. We are losing our teachers, our police, our firefighters, and our public servants. When I first came to Alaska as a high school vocational counselor, the competition was fierce. Everyone wanted to work here not just for the adventure, but for the great contracts our Unions negotiated for us. We were committed to remaining in Alaska and to becoming part of this exciting experiment called the Last Frontier.

How do we, considering the abdication of this current federal regime for the support and continuation of policies in effect since the FDR administration, paid into by the very people it supports--how do we allow our faithful public servants to lose all security in their retirement? Not only is this federal regime trying to dismantle Social Security but Alaska is failing to secure the future by its failure to give our hard-working, dedicated public servants a defined benefit retirement. A double whammy. This is unconscionable and just plain wrong.

The public service unions, AFSCME, NEA, and AFT, have supplied research to demonstrate the financial implications of relying on a defined contribution plan, aka the stock market. I will argue that the actions of the federal regime will destroy any retiree's hope of making the current defined contribution plan last until they retire much less through retirement. We cannot in all good conscience allow this to happen. Alaska owes those who have served.

I would suggest that you, as human beings, put yourselves in the shoes of our great Alaska public servants. Would you remain in Alaska to build your career of service, or choose to take your 403 B and invest it in a State offering defined benefit?

In Solidarity,

Jan Carolyn Hardy, President
Alaska AFSCME Retiree Chapter