

Konrad Jackson

From: Williams Karen <williams_karen5461@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2026 6:19 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: HB78

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Dear Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts on HB78 with you. My name is Karen Williams, and my husband and I arrived in Alaska in 1986 looking for teaching jobs. At that time, one was hard pressed to get into the Anchorage School District because of the intense competition for each teaching position. Alaska was attracting enthusiastic, talented, and passionate teachers because of the quality of life Alaska offers, and more importantly, the wages and benefits offered to public servants at that time. It was necessary for me to go back to school at UAA for my masters in Special Education so that I had an "in" into the district. My husband and I entered the teaching profession in 1989, still within the Tier 1 stage of benefits.

My husband and I dedicated ourselves to nearly thirty years of teaching for the Anchorage School District. Unlike so many now, we stayed, built our home, raised our family, and have chosen to retire only blocks from the schools we taught in for so many years. We continue to give back to our community through volunteering, subbing, mentoring, and helping to raise our grandchildren. I will tell you in no uncertain terms that we are able to do all of this, contribute decades of service to the profession and continue to give back to our community after retirement, BECAUSE OF THE DEFINED CONTRIBUTION PACKAGE OFFERED BY THE STATE OF ALASKA in 1986. Teachers today deserve the same benefits that we experienced. Period.

I suppose the biggest questions we all need to ask ourselves is what do we want for our children and our communities? I know that I want quality educators who don't leave after five years. I want to see our schools being able to attract and retain motivated teachers who then want to (and can afford to) stay well beyond the end of their careers to make our communities stronger and more vibrant. I am certain you all want the same, and I believe a huge step towards that is assuring a defined benefit package for all of our public servants.

Thank you,

Karen Williams
Anchorage, Alaska

Sent from my iPhone