

## Konrad Jackson

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**From:** John Hargis <jhargis@lysd.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 28, 2026 12:27 PM  
**To:** Senate Labor and Commerce  
**Cc:** George Smith  
**Subject:** Support for HB 78 on behalf of the Lower Yukon School District

Chair and Members of the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee,

I am writing in support of HB 78 on behalf of the Lower Yukon School District.

As a rural district, recruiting and retaining qualified educators is our greatest challenge. Since Alaska eliminated the defined benefit retirement option in 2006, we have watched talented teachers leave after only a few years. They consistently tell us the same thing: Alaska is no longer competitive for long-term careers without a pension.

This constant turnover is costly and destabilizing. It affects student learning, school culture, and district finances—especially in remote communities where replacements are difficult to find.

HB 78 provides a responsible, forward-looking solution. It restores a defined-benefit option with strong actuarial safeguards and allows experienced educators who return to Alaska to make a one-time election to reenter the pension system. This will help us rehire and retain proven teachers and stabilize our workforce.

This bill is not about going backward—it is about fixing a system that is no longer working for Alaska's schools.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

--  
John Hargis  
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