

Good evening Rep. Kreisler-Tomkins

I am writing this letter in support of HB 224. Across the country there is a shortage of certified educators and Alaska is not immune to this national crisis. This is especially true in rural Alaska.

House Bill 224 will not solve this issue, but it will go along way to help us make sure that they are qualified educators teaching our children. The more isolated the community, the more difficult it is to make certain that our students receive the best possible education. That starts with the person in the front of the classroom. Too often it can become the matter of a warm body, and that is not fair to our students.

Our students deserve every opportunity we can afford them, and it is they who will be best served by passing HB 224. Thank you for all you can do to help this bill move forward.

Tony Habra, Superintendent Haines Borough School District ahabra@hbsd.net
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April 17, 2017

Dear Honorable Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins,

I am writing to support HB 224. Filling vacant positions in remote parts of Alaska is becoming more difficult every year. This bill is a realistic tool to help address teacher recruitment and retention in rural Alaska. Please do what you can to move this bill forward and see that it is passed.

Sincerely,

Stewart McDonald

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Representative Johnston:

Thank you for introducing HB 224- the so called "retire-rehire" bill. I would like to go on record as supporting this bill for a number of reasons.

1. In many Alaskan Native cultures Elders are seen as key to passing on knowledge. While I don't necessarily think there is a direct parallel, the fact of the matter is teachers and administrators who have years of experience and historical knowledge can be an invaluable resource to a school district and its community. To waste this resource because a person has turned 62 and is collecting a retirement owed to them by the state seems short sighted and foolish.

2. Children born today in many parts of the U.S. have an average life expectancy of 100 years! The baby boomers who are retiring now are likely to live at least another 30 years. This is a huge portion of our population that still has at least a third of their lives to go. This bill has the potential to stem the "brain drain" we are experiencing as many of our best and brightest leave education.

3. The talent pool for teachers and administrators in education is evaporating. Our youth are not going into teaching as they have in the past. Positions go unfilled every year, or are simply band-aided with long term substitutes. Encouraging retired professionals to keep working with Alaska's children while we work systemically to solve the problem would be very helpful.

Again, thank you for introducing the bill. I am in full support of the bill. Feel free to contact me with any questions.

Mark Miller, Ed.D.

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Dear Representative,

I wanted to let you know that I believe HB224, which would allow for the reemployment of retired teachers and administrators to help districts fill vacancies, is a necessary tool to help meet school district personnel needs. For years districts have had to address emergency, part time, and temporary needs and it makes it hard to fill.

By opening up our options to include that talented group of former school teachers and school leaders, who come with a skill set and experience that few have, and a real interest in Alaska's children and young adults is a real win-win. Districts get quality employees for openings, and often these people are already familiar with

the community and school, or the region, and they know state standards and so many other important components of the work.

I recognize there is a concern about the so-called 'double dipping', and yet it is something the US Military and so many other agencies use to help meet the challenges that they face. What many fail to recognize, is that the greater number of these hires have historically served during family emergencies and illnesses, situations where employees find conditions are not what they had expected and want out of their contract, or when you see sudden increases in a student population and you need to make a last minute hire. It is school needs and student needs that drive these decisions, not what a retired former employee feels they need.

I would hope that you and your committee give this due consideration and support this bill. Thanks for your time with this matter. Have a great week. Jack