
From: Miguel Rohrbacher <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, April 13, 2022 4:41 PM
To: Stephanie I; House Finance
Subject: RE: Testimony for HB 220

Are you planning on calling in as well?

From: Stephanie I <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, April 13, 2022 4:38 PM
To: house.finance@akleg.gov
Subject: Testimony for HB 220

Hello,

I am a public employee working for the Fairbanks North Star Borough. I am support HB 220. We deserve a retirement system that works towards a dignified retirement for its contributors.

We are losing way too many public employees throughout the state of Alaska, almost all job types are affected by this system. I have seen firsthand the affects this is having on vital services provided to the public. Having a pension option for new employees would be a big step towards bettering our state as a whole, help to stop the revolving training door and help myself & my coworkers in our retirements and every day we work as a public employee. The public is suffering because of a broken retirement system and retention issues within public employment in Alaska at every level.

I have seen at least 6 employees in my department alone leave employment here after only 1-3 years of public service. They all have since moved back out of state and have moved on to better retirement & employment. When a workplace is consistently understaffed the other employees are left to pick up the slack. This leads to low morale, low employee retention, burn out and mental & physical health issues. One of my coworkers that left was suffering from significant mental & emotional issues from being so over worked; she moved back out of state even though she loved living here.

As public employees we consistently make significant sacrifices so that we can perform our mission. We need you to understand that we need help and we need significant improvement in retirement security in order for our services to keep running.

Please pass HB 220 and take a step toward restoring retirement security for local and state government employees.

Thank you

Stephanie Pearson

From: Stephanie I <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, April 13, 2022 4:38 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Testimony for HB 220

Hello,

I am a public employee working for the Fairbanks North Star Borough. I am support HB 220. We deserve a retirement system that works towards a dignified retirement for its contributors.

We are losing way too many public employees throughout the state of Alaska, almost all job types are affected by this system. I have seen firsthand the affects this is having on vital services provided to the public. Having a pension option for new employees would be a big step towards bettering our state as a whole, help to stop the revolving training door and help myself & my coworkers in our retirements and every day we work as a public employee. The public is suffering because of a broken retirement system and retention issues within public employment in Alaska at every level.

I have seen at least 6 employees in my department alone leave employment here after only 1-3 years of public service. They all have since moved back out of state and have moved on to better retirement & employment. When a workplace is consistently understaffed the other employees are left to pick up the slack. This leads to low morale, low employee retention, burn out and mental & physical health issues. One of my coworkers that left was suffering from significant mental & emotional issues from being so over worked; she moved back out of state even though she loved living here.

As public employees we consistently make significant sacrifices so that we can perform our mission. We need you to understand that we need help and we need significant improvement in retirement security in order for our services to keep running.

Please pass HB 220 and take a step toward restoring retirement security for local and state government employees.

Thank you

Stephanie Pearson

From: Stacy Luhr [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 6:53 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Re: HB 220 Public Input

Dear members of the committee,

I am a public employee working in the Petersburg Borough Finance Office. I support HB 220 because we deserve a dignified retirement and the current system is not working! I have seen many employees leaving for jobs with better retirement packages, and the Borough has had a very hard time getting applicants for vacant positions, even with pay raises and incentive hiring bonuses.

In my personal life, I often hear young working families considering leaving the state in search of better jobs and work/life balance. Currently there are 3 out of the 5 of us in our office working a second job to be able to stay in Alaska. Our classifieds section of our local newspaper keeps growing with more and more job openings.

In my position at the Borough Finance office I see a steady stream of new Seniors moving to town from all over the US and young people moving out. We have to offer more marketable jobs and retirement packages to keep young working families here in Alaska. Our economy and our working population demand a change, and I kindly ask you to pass HB 220! Thank you for your time and consideration.

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Thank you for your time,

Stacy Luhr
[REDACTED]
Petersburg, Alaska
[REDACTED]

From: Camie Gillen [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, April 13, 2022 9:35 PM
To: House Finance
Cc: Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
Subject: HB 220 Public Input

Dear members,

I work for the Petersburg Borough. I have been a loyal full time employee for over 9.5 years. I support HVB 220 because we all deserve a more appropriate retirement that accommodates the current cost of living to be here in Alaska. The current plans in place are not allowing employees to invest in a long term future in Alaska. We see many citizens around Alaska (our friends, colleagues, old contacts from school) leaving Alaska for better futures. Currently here in our Borough alone, there are over 3 pages of open jobs available in our town. There are so many small businesses fighting to stay open, essential services barely operating on minimal staff, and tons of families panicking over their future.

The cost to raise a family in Alaska is very high compared to my many friends down south. They get to take trips just by hopping into the car. Better and easier access to medical services. Opportunity is just a car ride away. Here in Alaska, we spend SO much money to try and live within our means, let alone afford to leave for vacations, medical needs, better our education or attend important family functions.

When I think of retirement, I envision my husband and I someplace else outside of here, because there is no way we can continue to live here long term. In my office, 4 out of the 5, have all applied for other jobs. 3 out of 5 of us even have second jobs other than our full time municipal employment just to make ends meet.

Nearly every day, my husband and I are scouting places to move along with many of our young friends looking to start families. If Alaska wants to thrive, we have to keep workers in essential services and small businesses in our State to keep it operational. If we don't invest in the future, we won't have one.

We need to keep our workforce and young families here. Please pass HB 220
And invest in Alaska.

Thank you,

Camie Gillen

From: Judith Ireton [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 15, 2022 9:14 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: HB220

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee:

Thank you for your work so far on HB220. I am a retired teacher and a 25-year contributor to the original Retirement System. I urge you to pass HB220 to give educators the opportunity to invest in a retirement system that will truly benefit them in the future and provide an income for them when they retire. Teacher turnover is reaching an all-time high, having a better option for retirement will benefit students right away as well as give teachers a major incentive to remain in Alaska.

Sincerely yours,
Judith M. Ireton
Anchorage, Alaska

From: dave ferguson [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 10:05 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: HB220

Because of tier 4 and piss poor starting wages we cant fill our damn positions! Pass house bill 220!

Sent from my iPhone

From: suz guz [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 6:29 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: HB220

Dear Legislators,

I am writing today to let you know I am watching the progress of HB 220 and ask you to support it! As a government employee it is important to me!

I have been a government employee for 16 years and as a Tier IV employee my retirement is frighteningly small and inadequate for the future. Please help restore a better plan for the future retirements of the many public servants who work for the many Alaskan residents. Please support HB 220.

Thank you for your work on behalf of Alaskans. Support HB 220!

Sincerely,
Susan Guzman
Kenai Peninsula Borough

Sent from my iPhone

From: Mary Burtness [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, April 16, 2022 8:53 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Support HB220

Dear members of the finance committee:

I am in support of HB 220 to be moved on and eventually become law. I am a retired teacher and a huge reason why I stayed in the state and gave the state school system 20+ years was because of the pension benefits. This type of pension keeps teachers here, an important component of retaining a consistent teaching force. High turnover is not good for students, school teachers or the state.

Therefore I ask you to keep this bill moving toward passing.

Thank you for your time,
Mary C Burtness

From: Danielle Pratt [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 15, 2022 11:52 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Support HB220

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to encourage you to support HB220. Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement. According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER: The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading; the 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

Teacher turnover is hurting our students. Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District, the fourth largest district in the state, had a difficult time filling positions this past school year.

HB 220 represents the possibility of a return to a real retirement system for educators and other public employees in Alaska. This change would have a positive impact on our students, our communities, and our state and local economies. Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees.

Thank you for your time.

Danielle Pratt
Schoenbar Middle School, Ketchikan, AK

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Danielle C. Pratt

From: [REDACTED] on behalf of Danielle Specht [REDACTED]

Sent: Saturday, April 16, 2022 6:11 PM

To: Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject: Retain quality teachers!

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

Dear House Finance Committee,

I have been a special education teacher in Kodiak Alaska for 14 years. Because I was hired in the spring of 2008, I am in the TRS 3 retirement plan. I came up here when my daughter was an infant. I have absolutely loved working and raising my child in Kodiak.

When I became fully aware of how problematic the TRS 3 retirement plan is, I took action by joining the SOAR (Saving Our Alaska Retirement) committee. I have been working on a solution for this for the last 5 years. I realized I have to make some tough choices. Unless the system changes, I cannot afford to continue working in Alaska and I certainly cannot retire here. Honestly, I should've left years ago. The only thing keeping me here is the desire to have my daughter finish school in her hometown and my love of this community. Also, I have had hope that the system might change.

As a family, we are preparing to move in 4 years, once our child finishes high school, unless the retirement plan changes. We have purchased land in the lower 48 and are preparing to build on it. I would finish my teaching career in another state with time to vest in their pension and to try to recover some social security benefits.

As you are probably aware, working in AK is a big detriment to those of us who have previously vested in social security. Not only do I not have a pension here, but I also get my social security benefits penalized because of not paying in while in AK. If I continue to work under TRS 3, estimators have indicated that I would have to work until the age of 75 to have half my current salary.

I am a great special education teacher in an area that has serious problems with teacher retention. Over the last 5 years I have seen it becoming harder and harder to recruit and retain special education teachers, paraprofessionals, related service providers and other specialists. I am in my 14th school year and currently, I have worked as a special education teacher longer than any other in my district. The vast majority have been here less than 5 years. They leave because of the work load due to a constant staffing shortage and learning about our terrible retirement system seals the deal. Very few even last 5 years. While the retirement plan isn't the only reason we have a teacher and staff shortage, it is, in my opinion, the biggest reason.

I am a life-long special education teacher, I have never wanted to do anything else. Even though I have spent my entire career in the high-needs behavioral division of special education, I have never felt more burned out than the past few years. The reason is the staffing shortage and high turn over. We are doing more with less every year.

I want to stay in Alaska until I retire. I don't want to finish the last 15 years of my career in another state. But unless something improves with the retirement plan I will be leaving in 4 years.

Please pass this bill to help Alaska staff and students.

Sincerely,
Danielle Specht

Sincerely,
Danielle Specht

 Kodiak, AK 99615

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, April 16, 2022 6:12 AM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Please help support Alaska Students HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
The 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

Teacher turnover is hurting our students.

HB 220 represents the possibility of a return to a real retirement system for educators and other public employees in Alaska. This change would have a positive impact on our students, our communities, and our state and local economies.

Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,
Judy Aaron

[REDACTED] Kodiak, AK 99615
[REDACTED]

From: Paul Jenkins [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 1:34 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Retirement

Hi All,

I'm not sure what to tell you here, other than the fact that I have worked for the State for the last ten years, and will retire at the age of 70, without enough income to get by. Yet, I have a friend who worked for the State for five years, 20 years ago, and will be retiring with a full pension. Please tell me how this is right.

Thank you,

Paul Jenkins
Deadhorse DOT/PF

Sent from my iPhone

From:

Sent:

Saturday, April 16, 2022 4:41 PM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, both as a teacher and an administrator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend. Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement. I have witnessed this firsthand as an administrator, struggling to recruit teachers to a state and system that is no longer competitive and offers little incentive to stay beyond a year or two. The turnover hurts students, impacts school climate, staff morale, and severely disrupts an aligned, continuous educational program.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.

The 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

I cannot emphasize enough how much teacher turnover is hurting our students and impacting their education.

HB 220 represents the possibility of a return to a real retirement system for educators and other public employees in Alaska. This change would have a positive impact on our students, our communities, and our state and local economies.

Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. This has been my home for nearly forty years, and I have a vested interest in its success, as a lifelong resident and a parent. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for my colleagues and other educators entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,

Katrina Stewart

Kodiak, AK 99615-7038

From:

Sent:

Saturday, April 16, 2022 4:29 PM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

I am an Alaskan educator and would like to thank you for considering HB 220.

Over the last 12 years of teaching, I have seen an extraordinary amount of turn over. Teachers that started years ago, when the retirement was good, have retired and teachers moving to the state aren't staying here long.

Teachers are no longer payed at a high enough rate to justify the cost of Alaskan living and, without a viable retirement plan or social security, there is no reason to stay.

Our Alaskan communities are struggling with so many aspects of life and school performance highlights these struggles. Kids are entering kindergarten without the social and academic skills children in the rest of the nation have. Then, they are not growing quickly enough to close their achievement gap. Without highly skilled and experienced, educators, the education system is not able to respond to the increasing needs of our students.

Teachers, like myself, don't want to leave. We love our communities, but we do need to plan for our own futures. I started teaching when I was 26. I love teaching, but I don't want to teach into my late 60s or early 70s only to potentially run out of money before I die.

Please pass HB 220. Public employees deserve to have a retirement plan that they can count on.

Sincerely,

Emily Milligan

Kodiak, AK 99615-9437

From:

Sent:

Friday, April 15, 2022 1:14 PM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

I am emailing because passage of HB 220 will make a big difference in my life. I am a 65+ year old educator. I should be retiring, but I'm not. I don't have the security of a retirement with a stable income. I am in TERS 3.

When I started to work for the Juneau School District 15 years ago, I didn't know that on my first day of work, I gave away a large part of my Social Security income for the rest of my life. I didn't know that the Social Security I had accumulated since starting work as a teenager, was going away. I didn't know that to get the retirement income level promised to me by the State of Alaska, I would have to work to age 85. I didn't know that I would probably have to rely on my children to take care of me because my work was not valued enough by the State of Alaska to ensure I could live to see retirement.

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
The 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

Teacher turnover is hurting our students.

HB 220 represents the possibility of a return to a real retirement system for educators and other public employees in Alaska. This change would have a positive impact on our students, our communities, and our state and local economies.



Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,

Carole Bookless

 Douglas, AK 99824


From: Jessica Tran [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 9:44 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: HB 220

Dear members of the House Finance Committee,

I am speaking today in favor of HB 220. Which would restore a pension option for public employees. Currently we are losing too many public school teachers across the board and nearly every job class is impacted. Without a pension option for new employees I am concerned that the staffing for the vital services we provide as public employees (public school teachers) will become harder and harder to fill and the public good will suffer.)

Alaska ended the defined benefit plan in 2006 after we discovered that those accounts were too underfunded to meet anticipated retiree obligations. Since these plans were eliminated, one of Alaska's greatest challenges has become employee retention and recruitment for public services. Alaska is one of the few places that does not presently offer a defined benefit type retirement for new public employees. Additionally, many municipal public employees do not participate in Social Security or the Supplemental Annuity Plan (SBS-AP). HB 220 was designed to retain and attract quality public employees while protecting the state from unnecessary financial risks in the future.

As a teacher that has taught for Anchorage School District and currently teaching for Valdez City Schools, I have met many teachers that no longer teach in Alaska when they discovered our poor retirement options. The poor option does not help the state retain nor attract new and experienced teachers. The turnover of teachers in a school is detrimental to the school and community climate and have experienced this many times during my teaching career of over 13 years in this state. I started teaching in 2008 and it was discouraging to find out that if I had only started teaching three years earlier I would have enrolled into a retirement option that I could rely.

I urge you to pass HB 220 and take a step toward restoring retirement security for local and state government employees.

Thank you,

Jessica Tran

Kindergarten Teacher, Valdez City Schools

From: Shirnberg, Ann [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 8:18 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: HB 220

Dear members of the House Finance Committee,

I am speaking today in favor of HB 220. Which would restore a pension option for public employees. Currently we are losing too many public employees across the board and nearly every job class is impacted. Without a pension option for new employees I am concerned that the staffing for the vital services we provide as public employees will become harder and harder to fill and the public good will suffer.

Alaska ended the defined benefit plan in 2006 after we discovered that those accounts were too underfunded to meet anticipated retiree obligations. Since these plans were eliminated, one of Alaska's greatest challenges has become employee retention and recruitment for public services. Alaska is one of the few places that does not presently offer a defined benefit type retirement for new public employees. Additionally, many municipal public employees do not participate in Social Security or the Supplemental Annuity Plan (SBS-AP). HB 220 was designed to retain and attract quality public employees while protecting the state from unnecessary financial risks in the future.

As public employees we consistently make significant sacrifices so that we can perform our mission. We are willing to accept the risk sharing and health portions of this bill to make it pencil out, but we need you to understand that we need help and we need a significant improvement in retirement security in order for our programs to keep running.

I urge you to pass HB 220 and take a step toward restoring retirement security for local and state government employees.

Thank You,

Ann Shirnberg
Administrative Assistant
Planning Department
[REDACTED]

KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH
144 North Birdley Street
Soldotna, Alaska 99669



PUBLIC RECORDS LAW DISCLOSURE: This email and responses to this email may be subject to provisions of Alaska Statutes and may be made available to public upon request.

From: Barbara Stek [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, April 13, 2022 7:39 PM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: HB 220

I am a retired educator still living in Alaska who was very lucky to have been in Tier I. I understand that your committee will be reviewing HB 220. A secure and fair retirement for Alaska's educators is extremely important. I am curious why the millions of dollars leaving our state with the Defined Contribution system is never brought up for discussion. The Defined Benefit or at least some hybrid will actually save the state money in the long run.

I appreciate your consideration in this matter.

Barbara Stek
[REDACTED]

Anchorage AK 99504
[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPad

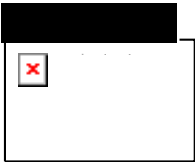
From: Whistler, Kelly [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, April 13, 2022 5:24 PM
To: House Finance
Cc: Rep. Andi Story; Rep. Sara Hannan
Subject: HB 220

Co-Chair Foster, Co-Chair Merrick, Vice-Chair Ortiz and Members of House Finance:

I urge your support for HB 220 to allow for an option for public employees to go back into a defined benefits retirement plan. This would take away some uncertainty with retirement especially for those of us that work most of our adult life within the PERS retirement system. As others will note, passage of this bill would assist with recruitment and retention of public employees, however my request is with looking into my own retirement when I reach that point in a few decades. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kelly Whistler
Administrative Assistant- Counseling Office
Sources of Strength Advisor
Thunder Mountain High School



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 15, 2022 12:43 PM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Please pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaskan-grown Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget. I am unable to call in to testify, but please accept this as my written testimony.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
The 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

Teacher turnover is hurting our students.

HB 220 represents the possibility of a return to a real retirement system for educators and other public employees in Alaska. This change would have a positive impact on our students, our communities, and our state and local economies.

Currently, as an educator hired after 2006 I have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means I will likely outlive my retirement savings.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope. There's are other, better venues for secure retirement.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,

Kalea Hogate

[REDACTED] Palmer, AK 99645-7528
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, April 16, 2022 4:13 PM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Please pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator and school psychologist, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
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I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,
Kathryn Korrow
[REDACTED] Kodiak, AK 99615-6560
[REDACTED]

From:

Sent:

Saturday, April 16, 2022 4:32 PM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

Please pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

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HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Gannon

Kodiak, AK 99615-6930

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, April 16, 2022 5:16 PM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Please pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend. Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

HB 220 represents the possibility of a return to a real retirement system for educators and other public employees in Alaska. This change would have a positive impact on our students, our communities, and our state and local economies.

Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope. I am currently considering leaving the profession I love and believe I was meant to do. There is no future for young educators in this state or in our Nation. This breaks my heart. I believe in education and love what I do. In the current state of things, I would never encourage anyone to enter this field. This is an incredibly hard job and can be incredibly rewarding, but professionals doing it need to have security in their own future as well. HB220 would give teachers this security. There is a direct relationship between student outcomes and the teachers in front of students. One does not stand without the other.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,
Lori Werdin

[REDACTED] Ester, AK 99725-0075
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, April 16, 2022 12:24 PM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Please pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
The 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

Teacher turnover is hurting our students.

HB 220 represents the possibility of a return to a real retirement system for educators and other public employees in Alaska. This change would have a positive impact on our students, our communities, and our state and local economies.

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HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,
Laura Capelle
[REDACTED] Fairbanks, AK 99708-3172
[REDACTED]

From: chris [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, April 16, 2022 7:41 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Please Pass HB 220

Hello,

My name is Christine S'gro and I am an educator in the Juneau School District. I teach students from all over the state who reside at a Juneau Youth Services residential treatment facility. I love what I do, but it is emotionally and physically draining. I have been teaching for the past 10 years.

Before entering the TERS system, I worked seasonally for ADF&G, I am vested with PERS but only 5 years, since my 10 years were seasonal and not always Permanent Seasonal so I did not receive retirement benefits. I am concerned about not having a pension from teaching when I retire and often think of leaving teaching and going back into the PERS system to build up some sort of retirement benefits for myself.

Please support and Pass HB 220, we work hard as teachers. Please show us the respect we deserve and provide us with a pension.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Christine S'gro

Dear members of the committee,

I currently work for the Kenai Peninsula Borough. I was born and raised here in Alaska, and have been in Tier 3 of the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) for approximately 17 years. Prior to that, I commercial fished and worked in construction for another 17 years.

I have worked in several positions with local governments and with the state. The problem with state jobs, is that they don't take out for social security, and Tier 3 went away. Without a pension, and no social security to build on, the financial incentive to work in government are not there. Most departments with the state are seen now as a training facility, and then they leave to work in the private sector, and some move outside and take jobs in government that still offer a pension.

Times are changing, and more and more people are taking jobs that they can do remotely, including accepting jobs from around the world that they find on Global Career Remote and International Job Boards. The State of Alaska must become competitive for their skilled workforce, and one way to do that, is to move back to Tier 3. I would also reevaluate the pros and cons of not having social security taken out of employee's checks. I know many who left state employment, including myself, over not being able to contribute into social security.

While I am fortunate to be in Tier 3, many of my co-workers are not. I have watched them come and go, many on the job less than a year. Covid gave people time to reevaluate their priorities, and what is best for their families.

The State of Alaska and local governments lack a viable financial incentive to gain, and keep employees. The "brain drain" is real. If I was sitting on your committee, I would vote to reinstate Tier 3, and reevaluate contributions going into social security.

Sandra Fletcher

From:

Sent:

Monday, April 18, 2022 8:37 PM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

Please pass HB 220.

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As a teacher in Alaska, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives recently. Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement. Teacher turnover is hurting our students.

HB 220 represents the possibility of a return to a real retirement system for educators and other public employees in Alaska.

This change is a step in the right direction towards creating a fiscally competitive marketplace for long-term education employment. Alaska needs highly educated people to stay here. We support the arts, restaurants, and in-state travel. We carry mortgages and are probably more likely than other populations in Alaska to be civically minded and locally involved in our communities. We are cheerleaders for our wonderful state. But without a competitive retirement package, some in our ranks cannot afford to stay very long and opt for greener, more competitive places in the lower 48 to teach long-term.

I'm a new teacher this year. I love Alaska and want to stay. But retirement comes to us all. I will be ready. I hope it's here in the 49th.

Sincerely,

Lane Bottemiller

[REDACTED] Anchorage, AK 99501-5004 [REDACTED]

From:

Sent:

Friday, April 15, 2022 10:30 AM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

Let's pass HB 220!

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
The 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

Teacher turnover is hurting our students.

HB 220 represents the possibility of a return to a real retirement system for educators and other public employees in Alaska. This change would have a positive impact on our students, our communities, and our state and local economies.

Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Creelman

Kodiak, AK 99615-6504

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, April 16, 2022 7:53 AM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country. Teacher turnover has been an issue for the 30+ years I have called Alaska home, and increased drastically after TRS Tier III was implemented. We talk about holding schools accountable, it is almost impossible with the ongoing loss of experience felt yearly across our schools. We train them on the best ways to teach our students only for them to move out of state after a few years.

Teacher turnover is hurting our students.

HB 220 represents the possibility of a return to a real retirement system for educators and other public employees in Alaska. This change would have a positive impact on our students, our communities, and our state and local economies.

Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system encourages educators to seek other employment opportunities in and out of state. They need a dependable retirement system to support themselves in their golden years.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,
Michael Husa

[REDACTED] Bethel, AK 99559-1293
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, April 16, 2022 2:48 PM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Support HB 220 for Teachers

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

I appreciate your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

I am a high school teacher in Anchorage and I just have to say thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, this is making turnover worse and hurting student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
The 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

Teacher turnover is hurting our students.

HB 220 represents the possibility of a return to a real retirement system for educators and other public employees in Alaska. This change would have a positive impact on our students, our communities, and our state and local economies.

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I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,
Megan McBride

[REDACTED] Anchorage, AK 99517-1659 [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, April 16, 2022 2:38 PM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Help us retire with dignity! Pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

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I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session. Help us retire with dignity!

Sincerely,
Sarah Nugent
[REDACTED] Kodiak, AK 99615-7004
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, April 16, 2022 6:01 PM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Let's pass HB 220 for our educators.

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
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HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,
Rochelle Andrews
[REDACTED] Kodiak, AK 99615
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, April 16, 2022 4:04 PM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Please consider passing HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

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HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,
Travis Cooper
[REDACTED] Kodiak, AK 99615-9309
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, April 16, 2022 6:24 PM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Pleasepass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

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HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,
Peggy Azuyak
[REDACTED] Kodiak, AK 99615-6210
[REDACTED]

From:

Sent:

Sunday, April 17, 2022 12:04 AM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

Please hear HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I encourage you to give HB 220 a full and fair hearing in House Finance as soon as possible. HB 220 represents the possibility of a return to a real retirement system for educators and other public employees in Alaska.

Currently, with no access to Social Security, and only a defined contribution retirement option, I will likely outlive my retirement savings. I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement, I may be forced to make the difficult decision to leave the state for a more stable future.

I was born and raised here in Alaska. I have always wanted to be a teacher; however, the onset of little to no retirement is disheartening. In order to retain teachers, there needs to be an incentive for them to stay in Alaska. With no retirement, it is clear that many choose not to stay.

When I consider the fact that I will have zero guaranteed benefits beyond the amount in my 401, and my health insurance plan, my resolve to remain teaching until retirement wavers. I have other options such as construction with a guaranteed pension plan, and or a commercial fishing route.

HB 220 will give hope to the thousands of dedicated public employees in Alaska. Please hear and pass HB 220 this legislative session.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

Hunter Blair

Kodiak, AK 99615-6164

From:

Sent:

Sunday, April 17, 2022 12:02 AM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

It's time to pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

Greetings from Kodiak.

I've been teaching in Alaska for nearly 30 years.

I was lucky enough to get hired in time for Tier II, so HB 220 may not affect me directly--but it will certainly affect the quality of education in this state going forward.

The last few years have been extra tough for teachers, navigating COVID issues and trying to stay upbeat and supportive of our children--all while trying to keep them learning in strange times.

There have been many, many times these last few years where I seriously thought about ditching it and retiring. I don't really want to, but all of us are exhausted.

Once upon a time, when I was young, Alaska offered very competitive pay and benefits, and drew from a rich pool of talent. It brought many smart, motivated people to teach in our state. We had highly motivated people working in our schools.

It's so different now. There are still many valiant and big-hearted teachers in the trenches, but they are demoralized. Many teachers, if not most, were thinking of quitting last year. We all put in so much "unpaid overtime" beyond school hours prepping and grading and worrying about our kids.

I thought that one thing COVID would do would be to highlight the value of teachers. Parents forced to keep kids home during quarantine breathed a prayer of thanksgiving when schools opened up again. I think parents by and large had a new appreciation for what teachers do.

But then bashing schools and school boards became a partisan sport.

Anyway. I could go on.

Please pass this bill. It'll set up Alaska for success. It'll make educators feel valued. It'll draw new talent to the state. You'll have teachers who are energized and ready to tackle anything. And you'll have students getting the best education.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mathew Freeman

Kodiak, AK 99615-0382

[REDACTED]

From:

Sent:

Saturday, April 16, 2022 10:09 AM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

Time to pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

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Teacher turnover is hurting our students.

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Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Alonso Escalante

Sincerely,

Alonso Escalante

Ketchikan, AK 99901-0056

From: joeb [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 15, 2022 7:32 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: HB 220 testimony

House Finance Committee Chair and members,

Following is a copy of the testimony I was going to give at the hearings yesterday, but circumstances prevented me from attending:

Thank you to the Chair for allowing me to speak today. My name is Joe Bertagnoli and I am calling from Petersburg. I would like to testify today in support of HB 220.

I started working as a Public Employee in 1991 for the City of Petersburg. I recently retired this past year and am very grateful to have a guaranteed pension for my spouse and I as we continue our life's journey. Being a Tier 2 hire I felt confident in my future, and it was always an incentive to stay with the City, which is now a Borough, to serve the citizens of Petersburg. In 2006 when the State moved to Tier 4, or a defined contribution program, a lot of that incentive to stick around for the long haul was gone for new employees. Over the last 15 years I have seen younger employees coming to work for the Borough and with the diminished retirement option they only stay long enough until something better comes along. They either move on to a different employer within the Borough or move completely out of town. This not only makes for more expense to the Borough to retrain employees but also does a disservice to the citizens of Petersburg when you lose the longevity and experience in the work force.

This trend can also be seen in our school systems as the turnover of teachers who are replacing the older teachers who still had the defined benefit program and are retiring.

This is not just a Petersburg story but a Statewide story. I just have had a chance to see it firsthand here as I was in the system for 30 years.

This problem must get fixed and soon. I believe the way HB 220 is written it will go a long way in doing so. We must recruit the best possible employees we can and after we get them, we have to retain them. HB 220 can get us back on that road.

With that said I urge you to support HB 220 from your committee.

I Thank you for your time and attention to this very important piece of legislation for the future of our State.

Joe Bertagnoli

Public employee retiree

Petersburg Alaska

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

From: Marta Mueller [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 8:44 PM
To: House Finance
Cc: Rep. Chris Tuck
Subject: Support for HB 220

Honorable Representatives,

I support HB 220 and providing public employees with pension benefits.

I am fully vested in the Public Employees Retirement System DB Plan Tier III with over 18 years of service in the Department of Natural Resources.

I have been a supervisor for 14 of those years, recruiting, training, and building teams.

I have seen a change in retention in DNR in the past 14 years. My most effective team members are in Tier III. I have observed higher turnover among younger co-workers and more recent hires.

My Tier IV co-workers do not stay. They move out of state or move to private employment. Sometimes they come back to State service on different teams in different departments.

I see the disruption in team relationships that comes with high turnover. I see the disruption in my own day. There is a steady stream of new hires that need training.

I spend a lot of time teaching and coaching on DNR revenue and billing and land records systems. These systems are essential to managing State resources. I do this in addition to my regular duties managing oil and gas lease sales and administering leases.

I could use a break in the quick cycle of recruiting, training, and saying goodbye.

I see a return to pension benefits as an important part of breaking that cycle and retaining co-workers. Please help me by giving new State employees incentive to stay and work toward a dignified retirement.

Thank you for your continued consideration of HB 220.

Marta Mueller
[REDACTED]
Anchorage, AK. 99518
[REDACTED]

From: Molly Taiber [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 10:30 AM
To: House Finance
Cc: Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins; Sen. Bert Stedman
Subject: Pass HB220

Dear House Finance Committee,

Thank you for your service to better the state and well being of Alaskans. I am a public employee for the Petersburg Borough. As you are aware, there is a brain drain from our Great State of Alaska. It is not penciling out for many of us to stay and work a career job in Alaska as a public servant. Nor is it worth encouraging my children to stay and raise a family here in Alaska.

Please provide us, and the upcoming generation with a pension that is encouraging to come to Alaska for, stay in Alaska with, and to create the desire to stay as a hard-working Alaskan in the same job for a career.

I am not in the education sector. Although, my child is an enrolled student at the public elementary school in our town. Having a high turnover rate of teachers or blending classes due to teacher shortages is not helping the education of our children in Alaska, nor is it possible that we are meeting our state education goals that are in place with the constant teacher shortages. We want career, quality, established teachers in our communities.

Less turnover in all public jobs' benefits all of us. Multiple staff shortages leave a higher workload and a faster burn out rate with current staff.

HB220 would benefit the State of Alaska. Ideally, *all* public servants could invest in their lives, happiness, health, retirement, family and the state of Alaska.

Please invest in the public workers of Alaska. Invest in your state by passing HB220 and encourage others to support this bill on the floor.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

Molly Taiber

Petersburg Borough

From: Joni Clark [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 10:18 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Bill HB 220

Dear members of the committee,

I am a public employee working in the Juneau School District as an Administrative Assistant; I support HB 220 because we deserve a dignified retirement and the current system is not working. I have seen numerous staff leave the district because the benefits are more appealing in other states. As I near my retirement I am nervous about how I will be able to make ends meet on what I will have in retirement under the current system.

I urge you to pass HB 220 and take a step toward restoring retirement security for local and state government employees.

Thank you.

Joni Clark
Administrative Assistant
Juneau School District;
Student Services Department

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 8:03 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Retirement

To whom it may concern: TO put it simply I believe that in order to retain and keep good workers employers need to also think long term. Most employees would like to stay at there place (s) of work until such time to retire. Times are really tough on everyone and the cost of living is only going to go up. It would give people a greater sense of accomplishment and well being to know that there employer is also in it for the long run for them as well as Company.

Robby

From: Rice, Mariah [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, April 13, 2022 10:01 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: SB 220

I am asking to vote in support of SB220.

Mariah Rice Juneau Alaska voter

From: Swanson, Desiree [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, April 13, 2022 7:27 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: I Support HB220

Dear members of the committee. I am a public employee working in Juneau at Thunder Mountain High School. I support HB220 because we deserve a dignified retirement and the current system is not working.

Thank you,
Desiree Swanson

--

Desiree Swanson
Attendance
Thunder Mountain High School
[REDACTED]

From: Les Morse [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, April 13, 2022 5:03 PM
To: House Finance
Cc: Rep. Sara Hannan; andi.story@akleg.gov
Subject: HB 222 HFIN Amendment 1 & more

Honorable Legislators,

I briefly turned on Gavel2Gavel today and observed the discussion on HB 222 amendments. I was struck that on attempt two amendment #1 passed, which provides districts the same funding for correspondence students as those attending brick & mortar schools. The funding formula for schools should be based on the cost of educating students, and then increases in the base will spread across all districts in an equalized formulaic manner. Amending this one component, which was increased about seven years ago without need, increases funding in an illogical manner that lacks business rules to support.

The discussion lead me to think members of the committee felt funding follows students, when in fact students are counted by school and by category which is rolled up to the district level. The district receives those funds, and the district is responsible for allocating funds to the schools. By overfunding (providing more funding than required to operate relative to other schools) correspondence schools a lack of balance in funding exists between districts that operate correspondence schools and those that do not operate correspondence schools.

Correspondence schools are assigned less funding in the formula than are brick & mortar schools for business operational reasons. First, instruction is primarily provided by the parent with minimal to no interaction between a certificated teacher and student. Second, the infrastructure support is different for obvious reasons: no building, no oil, no support staff, little to no principal interaction, etc. When the funding formula is designed it should be based on business reasons, and should be examined comprehensively within the entire formula rather than piecemeal.

I have years of experience working with schools and districts at the local and state level, and while retired now I recently have experience homeschooling grandkids for a year due to the pandemic. As a result of my career and home/family experiences I feel particularly qualified to provide feedback on this topic.

Les Morse
Douglas, Alaska

Sent from my iPad

From: Fletcher, Sandra <sfletcher@kpb.us>
Sent: Wednesday, April 13, 2022 4:38 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Comment for HB 220
Attachments: Dear members of the committee.docx

Hello,

I would like to submit a comment on HB 220.

Thank you.

Sandra Fletcher, B.A.
Assistant Planner
Donald E. Gilman River Center
[REDACTED]

KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH
5141 Lunny River Road
Soldotna, Alaska 99669



PUBLIC RECORDS LAW DISCLOSURE: This email and responses to this email may be subject to provisions of Alaska Statutes and may be made available to the public upon request.

From: baalerud_andrew [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 03, 2022 11:02 AM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: HB 220 - Legislative Session - Teacher Eagle River High School

Categories: Constituents

Senator Merrick,

Good morning and thank you for your efforts as our community's voice. I'm writing this to you as a fellow community member and educator at Eagle River High School. Please, I urge you to pass HB 220.

Personally, this bill is an important incentive to my family. My wife is a Milken Award Educator and an Assistant Principal in the district. We both have high aspirations and see the potential our students have. However, as Tier 3 employees in a system that frequently sees teachers displaced, desired elective programs cut (I currently teach French), and class sizes approaching 40 students (I began the school year with 3 classes that had over 35 students), it becomes difficult for us to justify teaching in this state.

Regarding retirement, with the lack of a defined benefit option and no participation in Social Security, we have the worst retirement in the entire country. In fact, one would argue that we actually have incentive to move and teach out of state, in almost any other state.

HB 220 represents the possibility of a return to a real retirement system for educators and other public employees in our state. This change would have a positive impact on our students, our communities, and our state and local economies by keeping public employees like my wife and I here in Alaska.

Without delay, please review this issue and pass HB 220 before the end of the session.

I would love the opportunity to speak more on this issue and others I see in our state's education system. As a fellow community member with children that attend our local public schools (much like yourself), I encourage you to visit our schools to observe how they have changed over the past 20 years. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely/Cordialement,

Andrew Baalerud, M.Ed.
French and Math Teacher
DDF Head Coach
[Eagle River High School](#)

From:

Sent:

Tuesday, April 19, 2022 9:15 PM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
The 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

Teacher turnover is hurting our students.

HB 220 represents the possibility of a return to a real retirement system for educators and other public employees in Alaska. This change would have a positive impact on our students, our communities, and our state and local economies.

Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope. This is very disheartening for new teachers in Alaska. Many leave by the time they are 30 because they don't want to work for 25 years and then not have enough money to retire.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,

Janet Crowder

Barrow, AK 99723

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, April 13, 2022 9:13 AM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
The 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

Teacher turnover is hurting our students.

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Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,
Courtney Wood
[REDACTED] Craig, AK 99921
[REDACTED]

From:

Sent:

Saturday, April 16, 2022 2:09 PM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
The 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

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Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,

Marnie Hartill

[REDACTED] Anchorage, AK 99504-4725 [REDACTED]

From:

Sent:

Saturday, April 16, 2022 3:59 PM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
The 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

Teacher turnover is hurting our students.

HB 220 represents the possibility of a return to a real retirement system for educators and other public employees in Alaska. This change would have a positive impact on our students, our communities, and our state and local economies.

Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,
Nick Steele

Kodiak, AK 99615-9427

From:

Sent:

Saturday, April 16, 2022 6:21 PM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.

The 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

Teacher turnover is hurting our students.

HB 220 represents the possibility of a return to a real retirement system for educators and other public employees in Alaska. This change would have a positive impact on our students, our communities, and our state and local economies.

Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,

Kristy Marostica

[REDACTED] Anchorage, AK 99507-4577 [REDACTED]

From:

Sent:

Sunday, April 17, 2022 6:51 AM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As a retired Alaskan educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As I am sure you know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country. It was not always this way. I myself stayed in AK in the 80's because I received very good benefits. Today teachers are frustrated and leaving our state. As I understand, the turnover is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.

The 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

Teacher turnover is hurting our students.

HB 220 represents the possibility of a return to a real retirement system for educators and other public employees in Alaska. This change would have a positive impact on our students, our communities, and our state and local economies.

Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings. Shameful!

Teachers love working with students. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for them or any educator entering our system, they are losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,

Francine Stredny

Fairbanks, AK 99709

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 17, 2022 8:44 PM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
The 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

Teacher turnover is hurting our students.

HB 220 represents the possibility of a return to a real retirement system for educators and other public employees in Alaska. This change would have a positive impact on our students, our communities, and our state and local economies.

Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,
Kelly Buxton

[REDACTED] Sitka, AK 99835-9609
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 17, 2022 5:10 AM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
The 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

Teacher turnover is hurting our students. And our communities

HB 220 represents the possibility of a return to a real retirement system for educators and other public employees in Alaska. This change would have a positive impact on our students, our communities, and our state and local economies.

Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,
Laura Hanson

[REDACTED] Cordova, AK 99574
[REDACTED]

From:

Sent:

Sunday, April 17, 2022 12:21 AM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
The 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

Teacher turnover is hurting our students.

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Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,

Sheila Beardsley

Kodiak, AK 99615-8776

From:

Sent:

Sunday, April 17, 2022 12:00 AM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
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Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,

Ryan Parker

Wasilla, AK 99654-0300

From:

Sent:

Sunday, April 17, 2022 12:05 AM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

Please value education in Alaska by taking care of our teachers and their future. Our teachers employed since 2006 have no social security as well as no defined benefit. These teachers will not stay in Alaska as educators once they realize how Alaska does not allow them to prepare for retirement the way the other forty-nine states do. This will become a state of tourist teachers who plan to work here for a few years and then return to a state that has a pension plan and/or social security.

As an Alaska educator, I want to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
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Teacher turnover is hurting our students.

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Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings. Without social security they have no disability insurance.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,
Jacqueline Cunningham
 Palmer, AK 99645-1303


From:

Sent:

Saturday, April 16, 2022 6:11 PM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
The 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

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Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,

Arsenio Guevarra

[REDACTED] Anchorage, AK 99507
[REDACTED]

From:

Sent:

Saturday, April 16, 2022 6:01 PM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

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I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Jones

Kodiak, AK 99615-7157

From:

Sent:

Saturday, April 16, 2022 5:28 PM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

House Finance Committee Members:

As an Alaska educator and life-long Alaskan resident, I encourage you to do all you can to pass HB220 before the end of the session!

I live and teach in Ketchikan. As a Tier 2 TRS employee, I already have a secure retirement. I am in full support of HB220 because my fellow public employees hired after June 30, 2006 also deserve the option for a real retirement! Last Thursday, I testified about how Alaska not offering its public employees a real retirement is hurting our efforts to recruit and retain quality people. I spoke generally; this written testimony will serve to provide you with more specifics.

Despite our competitive teacher salary schedule, Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District is experiencing hiring difficulties. We are the fourth largest city in the state, and we cannot attract educators.

Ketchikan has fewer applicants applying for vacancies. During my twenty-two years as a teacher, I have served on numerous hiring committees for both administrative and teaching positions. Two decades ago, our district received hundreds of applications for a single job posting. Today, we are lucky if we receive six.

Ketchikan hired teachers from foreign countries to fill vacancies. This school year, Ketchikan hired ten teachers from abroad to fill vacant K-12 teaching positions. Although these exchange teachers are working hard for our students, they are not permanent employees due to the fact that they are not US citizens. Working under a J-1 Visa means these teachers can only work in the United States for three years. If our educators are only here for a few years, how will a district like Ketchikan ever be successful in meeting our educational goals and outcomes for our students? High teacher turnover undermines student achievement, diminishes quality, weakens school climate, and imposes significant financial costs to already stressed school budgets.

Ketchikan hired teachers for positions in which they are not credentialed to teach. Last year we could not find teachers to fill our Type C vacancies (special education and school counselor). Thankfully, dedicated teachers in our district with Type A certificates volunteered to take on these new roles; the Department of Education granted these teachers temporary one-year Type C certificates. So, these teachers, in addition to teaching full time in brand new positions, are also working after hours to complete degrees for the job they currently hold. Our district also staffed vacancies with individuals who had not met standard teaching requirements. Essentially, Ketchikan hired first year teachers who were concurrently completing teaching degrees, and again, DEED granted temporary one-year certificates. I never thought I'd see the day when a district our size would hire teachers who had not yet completed the coursework and fieldwork required to be a certified teacher.

Ketchikan is not the only district in Alaska experiencing challenges finding educators. HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session. This change would have a positive impact on our students, our communities, and our state and local economies.

Thank you,
Sarah Campbell

Sincerely,
Sarah Campbell

[REDACTED] Ketchikan, AK 99901-9539 [REDACTED]

From:

Sent:

Saturday, April 16, 2022 5:58 PM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
The 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

Teacher turnover is hurting our students.

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Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,

Melissa Peavey

Craig, AK 99921

From:

Sent:

Saturday, April 16, 2022 5:03 PM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska parent, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
The 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

Teacher turnover is hurting our students.

HB 220 represents the possibility of a return to a real retirement system for educators and other public employees in Alaska. This change would have a positive impact on our students, our communities, and our state and local economies.

Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings.

Without any access to a secure income in retirement for any educator currently in or entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,

Natalie Schuldt

[REDACTED] Fairbanks, AK 99709-6239 [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, April 16, 2022 5:06 PM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
The 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

Teacher turnover is hurting our students.

HB 220 represents the possibility of a return to a real retirement system for educators and other public employees in Alaska. This change would have a positive impact on our students, our communities, and our state and local economies.

Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,
Keith Gray

[REDACTED] Ouzinkie, AK 99644
[REDACTED]

From:

Sent:

Saturday, April 16, 2022 8:55 AM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

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HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,

Donald Hennessey

Anchorage, AK 99503-7333

From:

Sent:

Saturday, April 16, 2022 4:11 PM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
The 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

Teacher turnover is hurting our students.

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Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,

Margaret Schmitt

[REDACTED] Kodiak, AK 99615-7071 [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, April 16, 2022 3:56 PM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
The 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

In addition, increased housing costs and the cost of living state-wide is causing fewer people to consider teaching in Alaska, as well as keeping teaching as a life long career. The pressures of teaching has increase due to lack of funding, resources, personnel, and engagement from community members.

Teacher turnover is hurting our students.

HB 220 represents the possibility of a return to a real retirement system for educators and other public employees in Alaska. This change would have a positive impact on our students, our communities, and our state and local economies.

Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,
Christian Hicks

[REDACTED] Kodiak, AK 99615-9426
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] behalf of Alizul Rosado
<alizulrosado@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 16, 2022 4:00 PM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator with hopes and desires to carry on my career in Alaska and my community, the issues raised in HB 220 are of the upmost importance to me. I am a paraprofessional and a student at UAS who is spending a great deal of time and money to prepare myself for service within the education system of Alaska. It is from this perspective that I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend, and encourage you to pass the bill.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget. The reality is that the efforts you are putting forth will help our students achieve success in many ways, but there is an important aspect that is missing. The retirement benefits of the teachers who will be educating the future leaders of Alaska.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
The 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

Teacher turnover is hurting our students. Furthermore, it is demoralizing to think about the additional stresses that are put on the teachers who are "sticking it out," only to find themselves without needs being met as the children they educated are flourishing in the workforce and paying taxes to the government.

HB 220 represents the possibility of a return to a real and necessary retirement system for educators and other public employees in Alaska. This change would have a positive impact on our students, our communities, and our state and local economies.

Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,

Alizul Rosado

[REDACTED] Kodiak, AK 99615-6361 [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, April 16, 2022 1:43 PM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
The 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

Teacher turnover is hurting our students.

HB 220 represents the possibility of a return to a real retirement system for educators and other public employees in Alaska. This change would have a positive impact on our students, our communities, and our state and local economies.

Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,
Kevin Klott

[REDACTED] Anchorage, AK 99508-2929 [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, April 16, 2022 12:54 PM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
The 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

Teacher turnover is hurting our students.

HB 220 represents the possibility of a return to a real retirement system for educators and other public employees in Alaska. This change would have a positive impact on our students, our communities, and our state and local economies.

Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,
Andrea Colvin

[REDACTED] Sitka, AK 99835-9450
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, April 16, 2022 11:56 AM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

My husband and I are both tier three educators. I am a special education teacher and he is a middle school counselor. I am finishing my tenth year of teaching and I love my job.

We are making plans to move to Minnesota where I will be able to afford to retire. I do not want to move, but I cannot justify staying here without changes to our teacher retirement. Teacher turnover is hurting our students. I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,
Jen Parker

[REDACTED] Wasilla, AK 99654-0300 [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, April 16, 2022 8:07 AM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
The 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

Teacher turnover is hurting our students.

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HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,
Tricia Krug

[REDACTED] Kodiak, AK 99615-7323
[REDACTED]

From:

Sent:

Saturday, April 16, 2022 3:52 AM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

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Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Thank you for your time. It's time for change in order to retain teachers!

Sincerely,

Madeline Mott

[REDACTED] Anchorage, AK 99502-2263 [REDACTED]

From:

Sent:

Saturday, April 16, 2022 7:58 AM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

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Teacher turnover is hurting our students.

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HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,

Herman Becker

Juneau, AK 99801-7116

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 15, 2022 1:47 PM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

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Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

I cant stay in Alaska, the state I grew up in and want to grow old in without this being fixed.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,
Sandra Cyr

[REDACTED] Wasilla, AK 99654-7166
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 15, 2022 11:53 AM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

I fully support passing HB 220 for all the reasons you have been offered.

As an educator interested in a strong system to serve our students, we need strong educators who are supported throughout their careers.

Currently, as a mid-career teacher, I have no incentive to continue beyond my desire to teach and as you know that has been tested in recent times. I have experience and knowledge to share, but teachers like me will be lost and upcoming teachers may not exist. Thank you for your work to support us, our students and education in Alaska as a whole.

Sincerely,

Laurie Hueffer

[REDACTED] Fairbanks, AK 99709-2092 [REDACTED]

From:

Sent:

Friday, April 15, 2022 9:48 AM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska occupational therapist working in a school , I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
The 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

Teacher turnover is hurting our students.

HB 220 represents the possibility of a return to a real retirement system for educators and other public employees in Alaska. This change would have a positive impact on our students, our communities, and our state and local economies.

Currently, educators hired after 2006 have no access to Social Security and only a defined contribution retirement option. This system means those educators will likely outlive their retirement savings.

I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,

Jaclyn Clifford-Walter

Kodiak, AK 99615-6425

From:

Sent:

Friday, April 15, 2022 5:50 AM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

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I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement for myself, or any educator entering our system, I'm losing hope.

HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,

Kerri Zelenak

[REDACTED] Kodiak, AK 99615-6682 [REDACTED]

From:

Sent:

Friday, April 15, 2022 9:49 AM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

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HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,

Daisy Briones

Kodiak, AK 99615-6294

From:

Sent:

Monday, April 18, 2022 8:12 AM

To:

Rep. Kelly Merrick

Subject:

Let's pass HB 220

Dear Representative Kelly Merrick,

As an Alaska educator, I wanted to thank you for your work on the operating budget that passed the House of Representatives this past weekend.

Thank you for prioritizing Alaska students and public education in the budget.

As you now know, Alaska educators have the worst retirement system in the country, and the turnover it's causing is correlated with poor student achievement.

According to Dianne Hirshberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER:

The 5 school districts with the LOWEST turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient in reading.
The 5 school districts with the HIGHEST turnover had only 46.9% of students scoring proficient in reading.

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HB 220 represents a chance to reverse this devastating trend and provide a real retirement option to thousands of dedicated public employees. I implore you to continue to review this issue, work on HB 220, and pass this bill before the end of the session.

Sincerely,

Anna Marie Kupilik

Anchorage, AK 99502-2303



International Union of Operating Engineers

LOCAL 302 • Washington and Alaska • AFL-CIO

Daren Konopaski, *Business Manager and General Vice President*

Corey Baxter, *District 8 Representative*

April 20, 2022

Co-Chairs Rep. Kelly Merrick and Rep. Neal Foster
House Finance Committee
Alaska State House
State Capitol Rm 519

Re: HB220- RETIRMENT SYSTEMS, DEFINED BENEFIT OPT.

Dear Co-Chairs Rep. Merrick and Rep. Foster,

The Operating Engineers Local 302 has over 100 public sector employees working between Unalaska and Wasilla. I am writing to convey our full support of HB220. This bill will help with recruitment and retention. One of the causes to this recruitment and retention crisis is the lack of a competitive retirement benefit package.

We believe that HB220 offers a more modest retirement plan than previous tiers and is designed and built to become over funded over time, which makes good fiscal sense and ensures long term stability for Alaskans. We urge your support and action to move and pass HB220.

Sincerely,

Corey Baxter
District 8 Representative
Local 302

Sean Jeffries, *President* • **Jason Alward**, *Vice President*

MAIN OFFICE: 18701 120th Avenue N.E. • Bothell, Washington 98011-9514

Telephone: (425) 806-0302 • Toll-free: 1-800-521-8882 • Fax: (425) 806-0030

JUNEAU OFFICE: 9309 Glacier Hwy., Suite A-105 • Juneau, Alaska 99801

Telephone: (907) 586-3850 • Toll-free: 1-800-478-9551 • Fax: (907) 463-5464

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