

Doniece Gott

From: PSD Superintendent [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 22, 2023 1:46 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support for SB 88

Co-Chair Senators Stedman, Hoffman, Olson and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Erica Kludt-Painter and I am the Superintendent of the Petersburg School District. I am also a proud parent of two Petersburg High School graduates, and have served the Petersburg School District as a principal and superintendent since 2001. Thank *you* for your continued work on behalf of Alaska's students.

I am writing today in support of SB 88 and to express my support for a change in the State of Alaska Teacher Retirement System. I am troubled by the current state of affairs in our education system, which is not only failing to attract highly qualified teachers for long term service but also failing to retain them. Moreover, the state's education budget has been unstable for years, resulting in less than optimal resources and opportunities for our children.

As a member of the Petersburg School District for 21 years, I have seen firsthand the challenges facing our education system, particularly in attracting and retaining high-quality teachers. Teachers play a crucial role in shaping the future of our children, and it is imperative that we provide them with the support and resources necessary to succeed. Unfortunately, the current retirement system in Alaska is not competitive with other states, and this, in addition to lower wages and high cost of living, has led to an exodus of experienced teachers who have decided to seek employment and full retirement elsewhere.

As you are aware, the State of Alaska has a history of recruiting teachers from other states who bring valuable skills and experience to our schools. However, we are no longer able to attract these long term highly qualified teachers because of the lack of a competitive retirement plan. This not only impacts the quality of education our children receive but also hampers the state's ability to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers.

I urge you to take the necessary steps to reform the current retirement system for teachers in Alaska. By doing so, you will not only help to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers but also provide a better future for our children. Our state's education system cannot afford to fall behind, and we must take action to ensure that our teachers are supported and empowered to provide the best possible education to our children.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Respectfully,

Erica Kludt-Painter

MISSION: Petersburg Schools will advocate for continuous growth, promote a healthy environment, and provide diverse educational opportunities where all students achieve.

Erica Kludt-Painter
Superintendent
Petersburg School District
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Doniece Gott

From: JOSHUA COURTAD <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 27, 2023 1:53 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Employee Pensions

Hello,

My name is Josh Courtad and I am writing in support of SB 88. I work as a Field Supervisor for the Office of Children's Services which can be incredibly stressful, but extraordinarily meaningful work. As someone in their late 40's I endure the added stress of whether or not I will have to work until I am 70 years old or older. This thought has not deterred me from working a career I love that I feel gives my life purpose, but it has had me considering a move to the Lower 48 to a state that offers pension plans for state employees. I love Alaska and love protecting our children, but I also don't love the idea of being 80 years old working as a Walmart greeter to makes ends meet.

I know I am not the only one who I work with that has had similar concerns as I. Please move SB 88 forward so we can stop worrying about our retirement and forget the idea of leaving Alaska.

Thank you,

Josh Courtad
Anchorage, AK

Doniece Gott

From: Jamie Burgess [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 22, 2023 1:00 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support for SB88 - Retirement Systems, Defined Benefit Option

Dear Committee Members -

I am writing you today to support Senate Bill 88, which would restore the defined benefit option for public employees, including teachers.

I personally am an educator who is negatively impacted by the lack of a defined benefit retirement option for teachers. Education is my second profession, and working in Alaska now will reduce any social security benefit I will receive upon retirement. In addition, Alaska is the only state which does not currently offer some sort of defined benefit option for public service employees. I moved here eight years ago and like so many, the move was supposed to be short-term, but instead I fell in love with this beautiful state and my adopted community and extended my stay. However, unless there is a defined benefit option available to me soon, I will have to leave Alaska and return to the lower 48, where I have a vested defined benefit in the previous state where I worked for 12 years as a teacher and administrator, because I am very concerned about the retirement benefit here.

Teachers are paid less on average than other professionals with a similar education level, and many have been willing to accept that lower pay for the pension available. However, here in Alaska, the lack of a defined pension makes teaching an even less attractive option, exacerbating the current decline of new teachers entering the profession, and accelerating the decisions of many current teachers to leave Alaska, or the professional altogether.

The teacher shortage is also driving an administrator shortage, and we need both high quality teachers and administrators to provide the best possible environment for our students and schools.

I encourage you to support SB88. There are ways to structure the pension system intelligently to minimize the risk to the state and maximize the benefits to our professional public servants.

Thank you for your time.

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Thanks.

Jamie S. Burgess
Superintendent, Nome Public Schools
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: amanda faith thompson <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 22, 2023 2:22 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Fwd: No on 88

Dear committee members,

I am an educator and teacher union member. My grandparents were in Alaska-based unions as well and help pave the way for me and my children to thrive here. I am thankful for what their pension gave them. However, when they passed, none of their hard-earned pension was able to go to their descendants. This is one reason why I am against HB88. I believe that I, a single educated mother, am fully capable at investing my retirement in a way that will benefit my family. I wish to keep my teacher retirement funds in funds that I can have a say in. This reflects our independent Alaskan spirit.

Not only is HB88 problematic because it doesn't transfer wealth from parents to children, it also is too expensive for our state. I do not want my children to be saddled with more taxes or reduced employment options as tax-burdened industries leave the state. I see a place where they can grow and stretch their wings into a productive and vibrant adulthood. Thank you for your time.

Best regards,
Amanda Thompson

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www.amandafaith.art

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