

To the Members of the Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement.

I'm sure at some point in your lifetime a teacher has impacted your life positively. I ask that you please imagine that person and what they would desire if they were writing to you today.

I am an elementary educator who was called to this profession from inspiring educators who taught me in my early years. I have always known that I would one day become an educator myself and I took great pride in doing so. I love what I do, and I love the impact I have on children's lives.

However things haven't been easy in my profession, especially lately. I see how disheartened and discouraged educators are with the current societal and political climate. We have persevered through the pandemic and the structural changes but we are very weary and tired. Never in my 16 year career have I heard amazing teachers discuss leaving the profession like I do this year. This needs to change, we need our state to have a more desirable pension to keep the good teachers here and draw more people to our field. That starts with having a respectable pension and retirement age for teachers.

I am writing today to beg you NOT to lower the contribution rates for teachers under our TRA pension. If you do lower the rates of contribution today, you will be making it impossible for us to ever have a hope of a pension that could support us retiring sooner than age 66. We have colleagues who had the rule of 90 and are now retiring around age 57. Those of us in tier two will work an extra ten years and pay thousands more than them for a pension that will not support us in having a healthy and happy retirement like these individuals received. It's not fair and it makes a lot of current teachers feel hopeless because this job isn't getting any easier.

Educators are dedicated and hard working public servants. Our job takes a lot of passion, energy and expertise and we deserve a pension that would recognize our hard work and make it easier to retire sooner than age 66. Please do not lower our contribution rates today. Please honor us and the dedication it takes to work in this profession. The students of Minnesota deserve high quality teachers who are distinguished in their work, and supported well financially.

Know that this issue matters, and it matters a lot to us tier two educators. We need you now more than ever. Help us to support and create a pension that we deserve. We work every day to help give children what they deserve, can it be time to think about our needs now too?

Sincerely,
Lindsey Lallas