

Chris O'Brien

From: Linda Greco <lgreco@johnstonschools.org>
Sent: Monday, April 21, 2025 9:00 PM
To: House Finance Committee
Subject: House Bills 6238 and 5198

Dear Mr O'Brien,

My name is Linda Greco and I am a teacher in the Johnston Public School District. I testify to this Committee that holds a crucial role in shaping the future of our state's public education system and the lives of those who dedicate themselves to teaching. Your decisions determine whether we can sustain a meaningful career, provide for our families, and retire with dignity. This committee's leadership and commitment are vital in addressing the injustices wrought by misguided reforms and ensuring that the promises made to teachers are honored.

I have dedicated over 30 years to teaching in my district. Over those years, I have witnessed significant changes—many of which have eroded the stability and security that once defined a teaching career. To put this into perspective, here is a comparison between what I was led to believe my career would offer when I was hired and the current reality:

- Health Care for Life for family
 - Fully funded health coverage (now, I pay a \$2000 annual fee for an individual deductible)
- Retirement in 28 years (I can now retire after 32 years, totaling 95 in age and years of service at age 62 instead of 58)
- Ability to collect 80% of my pension (I will retire under a hybrid plan with only 44% of my salary from pension and additional contributions from TIAA) I will need to work another job to supplement.
- A Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) (current status remains uncertain)

With pension reform and every new contract, I have lost ground. I have gained nothing in over three decades of service. This disparity highlights the profound injustice inflicted upon our educators, especially as retirees struggle to secure COLAs amid ongoing cost-of-living increases.

This is not merely about numbers; it is about dignity, respect, and honoring the commitments made to those who dedicate their lives to educating our children. The House Finance Committee's support is essential in rectifying these injustices. We need your leadership to restore what was initially promised and to ensure that teachers are valued and protected.

I urge you to recognize the importance of this issue and to act decisively in support of House Bills 6238 and 5198. The future of our educators—and the quality of education in our state—depends on it.

Sincerely,
Linda Greco