

Good evening Representatives,

First, thank you for your service to our state. My name is Amy Kalif and I have been a Spanish teacher for nearly 28 years on Aquidneck Island. I am writing to urge you to pass legislation to improve teacher retirement dates, specifically H7160 "Rule of 85" or H7390 "Rule of 90." When I was hired in 1998 teachers were able to retire after 28 years of service with 60% of their average salary. This is now my 28th year, but I cannot retire for another 8 years. At that time my pension will be roughly 42% of my average salary. I am working much longer for much less. I understand I have money in TIAA, but those investments will not have the time to compound and grow as they will for newly hired teachers. I am stuck in the middle of an old and new system. Many of my colleagues are stuck here with me. We are all on top step and many of us have Masters Degrees and beyond (as I do) making it supremely expensive for our municipalities and the state to fund our salaries, defined contribution and defined benefit plans. As time marches on without any of us being able to retire, the number of top-earning teachers grows. There is very little attrition. There is very little hiring of new (less expensive) teachers.

Passing H7160 or H7390 would allow teachers like myself to retire sooner, in keeping with the contract under which I was hired in 1998. Most importantly, passage of this change will alleviate the growing financial burden placed on our municipalities and the state. And, who knows, perhaps Rhode Island teachers will stay in Rhode Island and not be so wooed by the better pensions systems of Massachusetts and Connecticut.

I appreciate the time you took to read my letter. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Amy Kalif
Middletown High School