

Testimony for Senate Bills 2678 and 2538.

Mr. Chairman and fellow committee members. My name is Ray Pouliot, and I live in East Providence. I am the President of NEA Rhode Island Retired and a member of the Rhode Island Public Employees Coalition (RIPERC). I am also an Area Vice President for NEA Rhode Island.

I am offering written testimony on two proposed bills. The first bill is **Senate Bill 2678**. This bill requests that there be a base benefit increase in the **Teacher Survivor Benefit** this increase would be reflecting inflation since the last adjustment in 2017 with an “escalator” clause that will automatically increase the base benefit annually, based on the Social Security COLA. As we all know, during the early years of the Biden administration, inflation reached as high as 9.2%. We are looking for a mechanism to keep pace with inflation. Also, it is my understanding that this fund is now over 200% percent funded and is still accepting contributions from active employees. The TSB fund was created to offset teachers in those districts that did not contribute into Social Security. This effects approximately have the teachers in Rhode Island.

The second request is to consider **Senate Bill 2538**. In 2024 the General Assembly passed a law that changed the way in which an active member in Employees’ Retirement System of Rhode Island (ERSRI) pension would be calculated. The highest consecutive average in determining the pension was changed from 5 years to 3 years. In **S2538**. we respectively are asking that the same 3-year average be applied to those retirees who retired between 2009 and 2024. This is an issue of fairness and those members’ pensions should be recalculated on the three-year highest consecutive average at the time of their retirement and applied prospectively in calculating their pensions.

We ask that you consider the passage of these bills.

Thank you for your time and if there any questions, please contact me at raymondp70@yahoo.com.

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