

Jamie Plume

From: wscott.mccrae@verizon.net
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To: Senate Finance
Subject: Testimony for Thursday May 14, 2026

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I am writing to voice my support for 2 bills before the Finance Committee today:

S-2818 by Leaded Ciccone will restore yearly cost of living increases to retired Teachers, State, and Municipal workers.

Two years ago, this legislature restored yearly COLAs to the pre-July 1, 2012 retirees. Now is the time to finish the job for the post-2012 retirees, of which I am a member.

I worked a total of 28 + years for the people of Rhode Island. First, as an Attendant in the back wards of the Ladd Center; then as a Behavior Specialist treating aggressive & assaultive patients in preparation for deinstitutionalization.

I spent the last 21 years of my career as a Social Caseworker at DCYF.

The pension "contract" I had with the State for 27 years, was suddenly changed in a Special Legislative Session November 18, 2011. Ironically (or sadly) this passed on my 59th birthday.

I have now been retired for 13 years. The stable inflation environment that existed when I retired is but a distant memory. Over a decade without a substantial cost of living increases has eroded the effective purchasing power of my meager pension by over 30%.

While I have inflation adjusted Social Security, many teachers and municipal retirees do not.

Funding of these COLAs is entirely through the existing Retirement System Pension Fund, currently in excess of \$13 billion. The fund can well afford this without jeopardizing benefits for future retirees.

Thousands of retirees have died without ever receiving a COLA. That, evidently was the plan to bring the plan into full funding: The deaths of all pre-2035 retirees. This is what the November 2011 pension reform did.

Please restore the COLAs before we are all dead.

S-3251 by Leader Ciccone will change the Rule of 95 to the Rule of 90 for Teachers, State & Municipal workers

This legislation will allow those with 30 years or more of service to retire at age 60, thereby not requiring long term workers to wait until their full Social Security Retirement Age. This legislation should be a boon to recruitment and also result in substantial savings as top step workers will be replaced by a cheaper workforce on step 1 salaries.

The education system should particularly benefit with the infusion of new ideas and new methods from newly graduated teachers.

Many State jobs are physically demanding (correctional officers, institutional attendants, sheriffs). To expect these individuals to work well into their 60's before being eligible to collect a pension is totally unrealistic.

While I would prefer no minimum retirement age, S-3251 is a step in the right direction.

Thank you for reading and considering my testimony.

W. Scott McCrae
Brayton Road
Smithfield, RI
(Sen. Tikoian's district)

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