

**RE: Letter of Support for Senate Bill S3251 — An Act Relating to Education:  
Teachers' Retirement**

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Scott Conley, and I am a teacher at William M. Davies Career & Technical High School here in Rhode Island. I have dedicated twenty-five years of my life to educating the students of this state, and I write today in strong support of Senate Bill S3251, sponsored by Senators Ciccone, Britto, Felag, Burke, Patalano, and Thompson.

At fifty-two years old, I found myself in a position shared by many of my colleagues: a career educator who has given the better part of three decades to this profession and is looking toward the future. Under current law, despite my twenty-five years of service, I am years away from being eligible to retire with full benefits. S3251 would change that by allowing teachers like me to retire upon reaching age sixty with at least thirty years of total service, a meaningful and long-overdue reform.

Teaching is one of the most demanding professions in public service. It is not merely an intellectual exercise; it is a physical, emotional, and psychological commitment that takes a genuine toll over time. After twenty-five years in the classroom, I can tell you with certainty that the energy and stamina required to serve our students well does not diminish with the demands of the job but our capacity to sustain that effort at the same intensity does. Many experienced teachers reach their late fifties feeling the weight of the profession acutely, yet they have no viable path to retirement without significant financial penalty. This bill addresses reality directly and compassionately.

There is also broader public interest at stake. When experienced teachers are forced to remain in the classroom past the point at which they can do their best work, it is ultimately the students who suffer. Conversely, when veteran educators can exit on their own terms with dignity and financial security, it creates space for new teachers to enter the profession, refreshing our schools with energy and new perspectives while ensuring those who have served faithfully are treated with the respect they have earned.

I urge this Committee to recommend S3251 favorably and move it forward for a full Senate vote. This legislation represents a fair, reasonable recognition of the service that teachers across Rhode Island provide every single day. I am proud to support it, and I am grateful to the bill's sponsors for championing this cause.

Thank you for your time and your service to the people of Rhode Island.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Conley