

House Finance Committee
Room 35-State House

May 6, 2024

Re: Testimony in Support of House Bill 8149

Dear Chairperson Abney and members of the Finance Committee:

My name is Jamie Grissom. I live in Glocester and my state representative is Michael Chippendale, District 40. I work as a paraprofessional in the Scituate school district.

I am writing to testify in support of House Bill 8149 sponsored by Representative Edwards. Additionally, I support amending this bill to include educators along with public officers and employees. Teaching and providing a safe and welcoming learning environment is different than when most of us were in school. Educators are now working longer for a retirement benefit that no longer provides the dignity it once did.

Educators in my district do not pay into social security so they rely on a good pension so they can retire with dignity after years of service. If House Bill 8149 becomes law, the average teacher would see their pension increase by an additional \$1024. That's actual money in their pocket.

All educators deserve a secure retirement. Changing the pension benefit calculation from averaging the five highest consecutive years of earnings to three years, as House Bill 8149 does, has a meaningful impact for all active educators in the pension system regardless of their date of hire. I realize that there are other retirement proposals in front of you this session, but 8149 reaches the most people. It offers real pension relief for active teachers and municipal and state workers.

I ask that you support HB8149 so that educators in my district can retire with dignity and the next generation of educators will have the benefit of a fair pension.

Sincerely,

Jamie Grissom
364 Chopmist Hill Road
Glocester, RI 02814