

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight on this issue.

My name is Thomas Caruolo. I live at 53 Russell Avenue in East Providence and my Representative is Brianna Henries.

I have worked for the RI Department of Health since 1997. I am currently a Radiological Health Specialist.

At the time of the proposed pension changes in 2009 I was the President of NEA Professional Staff Association. I was tasked with convincing our members that the changes were necessary. It was not an easy sell.

By 2009, I had been employed by the state for 12 years. At that time an employee was vested at 5 years. However, as a result of the enacted changes my defined pension was frozen at 12 years and I was placed into a 1% match scheme. Due to this drastic lowering of my retirement benefits 3 years were added to my employment.

Because a 5-to-3-year average salary calculation would benefit the most active workers in the pension system regardless of their date of hire, I ask you to support House Bill 8149. Thank you for your time.