

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO SB 438: AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE TEACHERS' RETIREMENT SYSTEM

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Osten and Representative Walker,
Vice-Chairs Senator Hartley, Representatives Dimassa and Horn,
Ranking Members Senator Formica and Representative Lavielle,
Distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee

My name is Kenneth Poppe, and I live in Simsbury, CT. I am a retired secondary history teacher with 50 years of experience, 38 of which were in public schools: ten years at Staples High School in Westport, ten years at Farmington High School, eighteen years at Hall High School in West Hartford, plus ten years at The Ethel Walker School in Simsbury and two years in California. I am a member of the Association of Retired Teachers of Connecticut and of the Farmington Valley Retired Teachers group that support our pension and health plans. I have worked with Representative John Hampton and his consultant advisor Jason Knight who have supported our concerns.

I am writing to you to express my opposition to SB 438 as it now stands. I urge you to vote against this bill UNLESS two amendments are added.

AMENDMENT: ‘Upon enactment of SB 438, the TRB System shall elect from their number in a manner prescribed by said board, one additional person to serve as a member of said board for a term of four years following such election. Such person shall be a retired teacher, who shall be nominated by the members of the system and is a member of an organization exclusively composed of retired teachers not currently represented on the TRB.’

Presently, there are only two retired teachers on the TRB and four active teachers. It is necessary, in my opinion, to add a third retired teacher representative to the Teachers’ Retirement Board. It seems only logical that an additional retired teacher on the board would more adequately represent the 35,000+ retired teachers in the state.

AMENDMENT: ‘Tenure on the Teacher Retirement Board shall not exceed 3 four-year terms or its equivalent.’

It is necessary to add to the bill an amendment that the tenure of members on the TRB shall not exceed 3 four-year terms. A measure such as this would ensure a healthy turnover and represent a range of perspectives. In addition, three full terms will allow adequate time for TRB members to learn the necessary relevant experience to act in behalf of their constituents.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns—and thank you for your service to our constituents and the state of Connecticut.

Kenneth Poppe
Simsbury, CT