

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

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

My name is Jane Wilson and I live in Avon, CT. I retired in 2010 after teaching for thirty-eight years in my hometown of Plainville, CT. During my career, I was recognized for my dedication to my students and school community by being selected as Plainville's Teacher of the Year, receiving a Plainville Town Council citation for the development of a teaching unit for the prevention of teen pregnancy and being named as an outstanding Middle Level Teacher in the state by CT Association of Secondary Schools.

I am a member of: two retired teacher associations, (CEA-R and ARTC), RTHA, an advocacy group for retired teachers healthcare and I am an administrator for a social media page "Concerned Teachers of CT " whose mission is to link and discuss issues affecting active and retired teachers of Connecticut.

I am writing to you today in opposition to SB 438 unless it is amended.

SB 438 should be amended to include a third retired teacher representative on the Teachers' Retirement Board.

“Upon enactment of SB 438 and quadrennially thereafter, the TRB System shall elect from their number in a manner prescribed by said board, one 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 who are retired, elected by all the retired members of the system and, is a member of an organization exclusively composed of retired teachers not currently represented on the TRB.”

The present TRB is made up of 4 active elected teachers and 2 retired teachers. This ratio no longer fairly represents the proportions between active and retired teachers. In 2019, there were about 51,000 active teachers and 38,000 retired teachers. One elected retired teacher should be added to the TRB to correct the proportion to 4:3 ratio, as illustrated with the 2019 numbers on the line above. The last Statutory adjustment to align the number of elected retired teachers seated on TRB was in 1991 in PA 91-188. The additional retired teacher representative should be nominated by an organization that is composed of retired teachers, not currently represented on the TRB, in order to broaden representation for a greater number of retired teachers.

Additionally, I am opposed to SB 438 unless it contains an amendment to always include a Medicare Supplement.

“The TRB will include a Medicare Supplement Plan among those healthcare insurance plans offered to retired teachers. The Medicare Supplement Plan shall be substantially equal to or better than the other offerings and include all of the state of Connecticut insurance mandates. Costs shall be reasonable and fair.”

Supplement Plans retain all the assurances and protections of traditional Medicare that retired teachers have come to experience and understand over the years. A Medicare supplement protects the most vulnerable among us. Additionally, offering optional plans tends to make all plans better. Retired teachers, with help from active teachers, pay for about 90% of their healthcare premiums and deserve to have the Supplement option, for which they are paying, secured by statute. There is no fiscal impact for the State since the State pays only 1/3 of the base plan premium as their contribution. It does not cost the State more for a Supplement option because retired teachers pay the cost difference in the “buy up” to a Supplement plan.

I am urging you to you amend SB 438: AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE TEACHERS' RETIREMENT SYSTEM. (This bill will affect thousands of teachers.)

In closing, your continued work during this unusual and stressful time on these important bills is greatly appreciated. I would like to thank the Appropriations Committee for giving thoughtful consideration to amending this bill on behalf of all of Connecticut’s Retired Teachers who served the State of Connecticut and its proud education system.

Respectfully submitted,

**Jane Wilson
Avon, CT**