

From: Heidi Cabral <hcabral@pcsd.us>
Sent: Thursday, April 9, 2026 1:44 PM
To: Assembly <assembly@petersburgak.gov>
Subject: HB 78

Dear Petersburg Borough Assembly Members,

I am writing to ask you to support the resolution backing House Bill 78.

As a teacher in Petersburg, hired under the current retirement system, I do not have access to a pension or Social Security through my employment. This has had a real impact on my family and how we think about our future. The cost of living in Alaska is already high, and in many ways we can barely afford to live here as it is. Knowing that there is no guaranteed retirement benefit makes it very difficult to see a path where I can afford to spend my entire career here and retire as a teacher in Alaska.

It is also important to understand that today's teachers are working under a very different retirement system than many of Alaska's retired educators. Teachers who began their careers before 2006 were able to earn a defined benefit pension, which provided long-term stability and a predictable retirement. Those of us hired since then do not have that same security. Because of this, the realities facing today's teachers are very different from those faced by previous generations of educators in Alaska.

Without meaningful retirement security, many of us teachers are forced to consider leaving the state or the profession entirely. I care deeply about my students and about the community I serve, but the current system makes long-term stability feel uncertain. The possibility of outliving my retirement savings is a real concern when retirement depends entirely on personal contributions and market performance.

A defined benefit option would change the way many educators think about their future here. It would provide the stability and predictability that allows teachers to commit to Alaska for the long term. It would also send a powerful message that our state and communities value the work teachers and other public employees do.

I have already seen colleagues come to Alaska for a few years and then move to other states where retirement benefits provide more security. That constant turnover affects our schools and our students, who benefit most from experienced teachers who are able to stay and build lasting relationships within their communities.

Supporting this resolution would help communicate to state leaders that Petersburg understands how important it is to recruit and retain teachers and other public employees. We want to continue serving Alaska's students, but without retirement security we may not be able to afford to make Alaska our permanent home and that makes me sad.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Heidi Cabral

"Live & Learn"

Heidi Cabral

Special Education Teacher

Rae C. Stedman Elementary

Petersburg School District

877-526-7656