

From: Trevor Wilson <twilson@pcsd.us>
Sent: Thursday, April 9, 2026 4:02 PM
To: Assembly <assembly@petersburgak.gov>
Subject: Support for HB 78

Dear Petersburg Borough Assembly members,

I am writing today to explain why I am in full support of HB 78. I am a lifelong Alaskan who has lived in the state my entire life. I am new to the Petersburg community, but I am not new to Alaska. I grew up in Unalaska, living there from the time I was 2 years old until I graduated high school. I then returned to teach there for 2 years before making the decision to leave and come teach in Petersburg. My own father taught in the state for 25 years, 4 in Dillingham, and then 21 in Unalaska, working as a principal for the second half of his time there. When he moved to the state, there was still a defined benefit retirement plan in place which was a huge factor in him deciding to stay in the state and raise a family. As myself and other young educators are faced with this same decision on if we want to stay in the state and raise a family, the absence of a defined benefit plan makes it very difficult to stay. If I were to leave the state, this would be the only reason. Alaska is my home, and I would love to call the community of Petersburg home for a long time, but public employees also have to consider their financial future.

The defined contribution plan, while portable, does little to encourage teachers to stay in the state and truly call Alaska home, as my father did. The portable nature of it is great for teachers who plan on only being here for a few years, but for those of us who want to stay longer, a defined benefit plan would be much more effective for teacher retention and recruitment. It provides the security that those of us who do want to stay and raise families would need to motivate us to stay in the state. Right now, young teachers are leaving the state because of the absence of a secure financial future. If there is nothing put in place to give public employees a defined benefit plan, I will probably be the next to leave the community and the state. The defined contribution plan puts all of the financial risk on the teachers. Political leaders and world politics can cause stock prices to plummet quickly and without warning. Having a 401k be the only source of retirement is very scary because of the rapid fluctuations, and the possibility of a stock crash at any time.

As I find myself in the position of having to decide on if Alaska will be my forever home, a defined benefit plan would be something that would help to make this decision to stay easier. This is my third year teaching, and I would love to continue volunteering with youth sports and helping kids to learn in Petersburg. This is truly a place that I could see myself living for not only for the immediate future, but for years to come. If there is no defined benefit plan put in place however, I fear that I will have to move out of state to a state that has a defined benefit plan in place for public employees. The uncertainty of

retirement is a huge consideration for myself and other young educators, and a defined benefit plan would go a long way in helping us to stay and continue to call our great state home.

Thank you for taking the time to read my comments and opinion and for helping to consider HB 87 as a solution to the problem of teachers leaving Alaska.

Trevor Wilson
4th Grade Teacher
Powered by Caffeine and Dream
Rae C Stedman
Petersburg, AK