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Contact Information:

Office: 614-466-8258
Email: rep30@ohiohouse.gov

**Majority Floor Leader Bill Seitz
The Ohio House of Representatives**

**Sponsor Testimony for House Bill 78: Regarding State Teachers Retirement Board
elections and membership**

Chairman Hackett, Vice Chair Lang, Ranking Member Craig and Members of the committee, it is my pleasure to present sponsor testimony on HB 78.

This legislation addresses voting procedures within the State Teachers Retirement System (STRS). Currently, the STRS Board includes five members representing actively employed teachers, elected solely by actively employed teachers, and two retiree members, elected solely by retiree members. This in itself is interesting because currently, there are just about as many retiree members as there are active members in STRS.

That disparity is a subject for another discussion, and we are proposing a more modest step that corrects an anomaly in current law whereby a re-employed retiree (someone who was an active STRS member, then retired, and now is re-employed in an STRS-covered position) is ineligible to run for the STRS Board either as a representative of the active members or as a representative of the retired members. Effectively, these individuals are entirely disenfranchised. Our legislation simply proposes that re-employed retirants be eligible to run for election as a representative of the retired members, while still barring them from running for election as a representative for the active members.

We believe this modest proposal is fair and will give a voice to the not insubstantial number of re-employed retirants working in the STRS-covered positions. In addition, we believe the voice

of these older persons may provide wisdom and maturity that would improve the overall functioning of the State Teachers Retirement System.

This legislation was also amended in the House to allow student teachers who hold a pre-service teacher permit and are employed as substitute teachers by a school district to be included as STRS members, however it explicitly states that they are excluded from being members of the School Employees Retirement System.

House Bill 78 passed unanimously out of the House and has several proponents such as The Ohio Education Association, the Ohio Federation of Teachers, and the Ohio Retirement for Teachers Association. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on HB 78, I would be happy to answer any questions that the committee may have.

