

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

I am happy to provide my testimony in support of House Bill 78. This bill will provide a voice for thousands of people that have retired from their educational career and have been re-employed in public schools. Currently, these 'retired/rehired' people have no opportunity to serve on the STRS pension board despite making contributions to the system. Currently, the STRS board is comprised of eleven people. Four of these people are political appointees and seven of the members are elected by STRS members. With nearly ½ of the total membership of STRS members, retirees only hold two of the seven elected seats and only hold two of the eleven seats on the STRS board. Stated another way, 150,000 retirees have the same representation on their pension board that the governor of Ohio does.

Through revised code 3307.05 the intent of the legislative bodies in Ohio was to have educators hold a majority of the seats on their pension board. Allowing retired and re-employed educators an opportunity to serve on the STRS board ensures that the best and brightest people have an opportunity to serve on the pension board.

Although retirees are woefully underrepresented on the STRS board, HB 78 is a good faith effort to improve the composition of the STRS board and provide opportunities to several thousand potential educators to serve on the pension board.