

Testimony of

Eugene Bernard

Retired Educator

Before the

Appropriations Committee

Re:

**SB 107: AN ACT CONCERNING THE TEACHERS' RETIREMENT SYSTEM HEALTH INSURANCE
SUBSIDY.**

March 18, 2022

Good morning, Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France, and members of the Appropriations Committee.

I testify today in support of SB 107 and the increase in the health insurance subsidy for retired teachers; however, I urge you to amend the proposal to increase the subsidy amount for all retired educators.

The retired teachers' health insurance subsidy has not seen an increase since its 1996 even though insurance prices have continued to go up exponentially. As such, I encourage you to amend this proposal to double the current subsidy from \$110 to \$220 per person month for retired teachers and their spouses under age 65 to purchase insurance coverage from their former school districts and to \$440 per month for retired teachers age 65 and over who do not qualify for Medicare.

I am writing to express my deep concern for my fellow retired teachers who after a career serving our youth & communities face the financial hardship of expensive healthcare in their retirement. The out of pocket premium for the years between retirement & Medicare is shockingly expensive. For the many teachers who will NEVER qualify for Medicare this expensive is a lifetime expensive. I am asking for your support of the 220/440 proposal to lighten the financial burden of these "golden" years for those who served their communities for decades. Thank you for your heartfelt consideration.

Thank you for addressing this critical issue impacting our retired educators.