

Testimony of

Heidi Florian

Retired Educator

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Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Heidi Florian and I recently retired after 25 years of teaching in Connecticut's public schools. I am here today to oppose Governor Lamont's proposal to reduce the retired teachers' healthcare subsidy from one-third to one-fourth. This reduction could place an unfair and unexpected financial burden on retirees like me, who dedicated our careers to educating Connecticut's children.

As a newly retired educator, I planned my retirement based on the commitments the state made regarding pension and healthcare benefits. I relied on the promise that my pension and the existing healthcare subsidy would allow me to afford essential medical care. This proposed reduction could put the plan at risk in the future, with the state passing on the costs through retiree health premiums. It could significantly increase my out-of-pocket healthcare costs at a time when every dollar counts.

The rising costs of healthcare, prescription medications, and everyday expenses already pose challenges for retirees. A shift in costs to retirees would force many of us to make difficult choices—whether it be delaying medical care, forgoing necessary treatments, or struggling to afford basic living expenses. No retired educator should have to face these choices after giving decades of service to Connecticut's students.

Beyond the financial impact, this proposal sends a discouraging message to current educators and those considering entering the profession. Connecticut is already facing a teacher shortage, and undermining the retirement security of our educators will only make it harder to attract and retain high-quality teachers.

I respectfully urge you to reject this proposed cut and protect the healthcare benefits that Connecticut's retired teachers have earned and deserve. The state must honor its commitment to those who dedicated their lives to public service.

Thank you for your time and consideration.