

March 29, 2021

Update on current events:

With the introduction last week of the Speaker's pension proposal, we now know that she intends to have teachers work longer, pay more, and get less in retirement. We also know that she refuses to tap the state's wealthiest families and businesses – or take advantage of the billions of extra federal dollars pouring into the state – to solve the system's funding issues. Instead, she is proposing steps that will cost teachers more than \$306 million dollars, all of which prompts the question: whose side is she and her fellow Democratic leaders on? Right now, it appears that she would rather protect the wealthiest among us from higher taxes than to do the right thing for teachers.

On Friday, the House Government Operations Committee held the first of two perfunctory public hearings. More than 3,900 people have already viewed Friday's hearing, where dozens of members made it crystal clear what they think of the proposal, even if some of the committee's members seemed more interested in their phones than in the testimony. If you haven't had a chance to view it, [check it out here](#). Be prepared to be simultaneously angry and proud; angry at the Speaker's pension proposal and proud of your fellow members. The Committee will continue work on the proposal.

You can also catch Monday's hearing, [right here](#).

More organizations are opposed to the Speaker's pension proposal.

- The **Vermont Superintendents Association** said in a [statement](#) "The very serious problems arising from the unfunded liabilities – fiscal, operational, and political – should not be laid at the feet of the dedicated educators who have completely met their obligations as contributors to the system every step of the way."
- The **Vermont School Libraries Association**, likewise, [noted](#) its opposition to the Speaker's plan. "Equity, at its core, is about fairness and justice. The current pension proposal is neither fair nor just."
- **Lt. Gov. Molly Gray** issued her own [statement](#) criticizing the Speaker's approach and acknowledging that women – who are the majority of the teacher workforce – are disproportionately affected. "This proposal represents a broken commitment to our teachers and employees made at the time of hiring. Vermont's teachers, in particular, have made extraordinary sacrifices during this pandemic, risking their health and safety to educate our children."

Take Action:

- **Be Heard! Contact your Legislators** – Make your voice heard. Call, write letters, send emails. You legislators need to hear from you!
 - Email your legislators: <https://actionnetwork.org/letters/tell-house-gov-ops-not-on-our-backs-protect-your-pension/>
 - Look up your legislators to call them: <https://legislature.vermont.gov/people/>
- **Be Seen! Visibility Week of Action March 29-April 2** – Check if your local associations have an event already planned, if not organize one.
- **Get Red for Ed - Wear Red for Ed on Fridays** – Show solidarity with you fellow teachers across the state as you stand up to protect your pension. Post your photo: <https://www.facebook.com/events/809210193017023/>
- **Share your story on social media** – How will the pension cuts will impact you? Use the hash tags:
 - #whosideareyouon
 - #protectourpension
 - #keepthepromise
 - #vtpoli