

6-14-17

TO: Michigan House Education Reform Committee
This Statement Is to Be "Read" To The Members of The House Education Reform Committee

FROM: John Baublitz
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RE: **House Bill 4647 – Closing Hybrid Pension System to New Teachers**

We have an education crisis in this state in case you haven't noticed. Michigan is having trouble recruiting enough teachers, especially good teachers. Enrollments in teacher training programs in Michigan are all on a rapid decline. Teaching is very difficult and draining, if done right. Teaching involves long hours of work every evening and every weekend. The myth that this is all compensated for by a summer vacation is largely just a myth. Younger teachers are usually in school themselves for a decade of summers working to satisfy certification requirements and to earn advanced degrees to get paid a little more. Most new teachers graduate with large student loan debt that must be repaid with modest salaries leaving nothing left to invest in the Legislature's proposed 401k-pension plan.

For many years, teachers have had a few consolations – good health care and a decent pension. But for at least the last decade, some in the Legislature have been hell-bent on reducing teacher pay and benefits. The excuse has been that Michigan is a poor state, and teachers must accept lower salaries and fewer benefits. I, however, make the case that given this economic woes argument; that it would make sense to spend more to attract the best and brightest to the profession to help Michigan improve its economic situation. After all our students deserve the best and brightest teachers in their classrooms. But I realize that there are those in the Legislature that don't think this way. They see nothing wrong with paying teachers less and less each year while spending millions meant for repairing our roads to just take pensions away from new teachers. **House Bill 4647** seems like the Legislature has it in for teachers, period!

I firmly believe that our public educators should be fully compensated for the value of their work. This full compensation includes a public pension not a 401k that most will not be afford when they begin their professions. Undercompensating our educators will make it harder to recruit good teachers, which means that it will become harder than ever for this state to be economically competitive in the future. And lastly, as a taxpayer, I oppose millions being spent just to take something away from teachers. I demand that my tax dollars the Legislature wants to spend just to take pensions away from teachers be used instead to repair our crumbling roads and bridges. Thank you for considering my point of view.