



To: Senate Committee on Finance
From: Erich Haslehurst
Date: May 8, 2025
Re: S450 – RELATING TO EDUCATION – TEACHERS' RETIREMENT

Dear Chairman DiPalma and Members of the Finance Committee,

On behalf of the National Education Association Rhode Island (NEARI) and our more than 12,000 members, we submit this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 450, commonly known as the “Rule of 90.”

This legislation proposes a long-overdue and meaningful change to the retirement eligibility requirements for public school teachers by allowing them to retire when their age plus years of service equals 90, regardless of whether they’ve reached the current minimum retirement age.

NEARI represents thousands of public school educators across Rhode Island who have committed their professional lives to serving students, families, and communities. Many of these educators began their careers early and have devoted 30, 35, even 40 years to the classroom. Under the current rules, they are required to continue working well beyond what most would consider a full career—often in roles that are physically and emotionally demanding.

The Rule of 90 would provide a fair and flexible retirement path that reflects both a teacher’s age and their years of service. It recognizes the real-world experience of educators who have spent decades helping Rhode Island’s students succeed and provides them with the opportunity to retire with dignity and security when they have truly earned it.

This bill is not a giveaway—it is a thoughtful correction that aligns Rhode Island with many other states that use service-based formulas for retirement eligibility. It will also help address the growing challenge of recruitment and retention in public education. Younger educators are more likely to commit to a career in teaching if they see a clear, reasonable path to retirement at the end of a full career.

This legislation does not impose retirement; it simply gives teachers the choice to retire when they have reached a combined milestone of service and age that clearly demonstrates a career completed, if they so choose.

For these reasons, we strongly urge you to support Senate Bill 450 and restore a fair, respectful retirement option for the dedicated teachers who keep Rhode Island’s public education system strong.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Erich Haslehurst
National Education Association Rhode Island