



February 18, 2025

The Massachusetts General Court
24 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Legislator,

On behalf of the Massachusetts Teachers Association, the American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts, and the Boston Teachers Union and the over 140,000 educators, school employees, and educational support staff we collectively represent, we are writing in support of [H.2932](#) *An Act relative to benefits for teachers* and [S.1884](#) *An Act relative to teacher retirement election*.

These bills seek to rectify the confusion surrounding the original enrollment process for RetirementPlus for teachers hired before July 1, 2001, which led to thousands being unfairly shut out of the program.

In 2001, the state introduced a new alternative superannuation retirement system, the Teachers Alternative Retirement Plan (TARP), which allows teachers to retire a little earlier if they increase the amount they contribute to their pension to 11% of their salary. Also known as RetirementPlus (R+), this new system was available to teachers, school nurses, and related service providers who were members of the teachers' retirement system or the Boston retirement system. Teachers hired before July 1, 2001, had the option to elect to join RetirementPlus during a 6-month enrollment window, however, an often-confusing process that lacked uniformity led to multiple issues, with many left out. Some were led to believe they had been enrolled, only to later learn that they had not been. Other teachers never received an enrollment form. Many were told in error that if they were currently contributing 11% of their salary toward their pension, they were therefore enrolled in RetirementPlus. Others had the full 11% deducted from their pay only to later be told that they had been overpaying or were unenrolled without being notified. While other teachers out on maternity leave during the enrollment period were not provided the opportunity to enroll.

H.2932 and S.1884 would rectify the confusion and barriers these teachers faced by allowing those hired before July 1 of 2001 a one-time opportunity to enroll in

RetirementPlus. Any teacher electing to enroll would pay the difference between what they have paid in deductions since 2001 and what they would have paid if they had opted in at the time plus interest. This “make-up amount” could be paid through a payment plan or in one lump-sum and would be paid to their retirement system prior to retirement.

A similar bill was recently passed into law (Chapter 134 of the Acts of 2022), which allowed teachers hired on or after July 1, 2001, who were not enrolled in RetirementPlus to have an opportunity to do so. Under the 2022 law all teachers are automatically enrolled in RetirementPlus. The House passed [H.5136](#), a version of the bills we are advocating for today, in December 2024. Unfortunately, that legislation did not pass the Senate before the end of 2023-2024 legislative session.

We respectfully request that you co-sponsor H.2932 and S.1884 support their expedited passage by both branches of the legislature.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

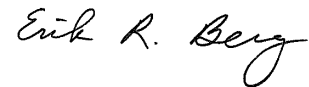
Sincerely,



Max Page
President
Massachusetts Teachers Association



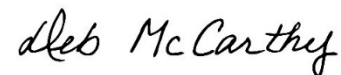
Jessica Tang
President
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President
Boston Teachers Union



Brant Duncan
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