



Maryland Retired School Personnel Association

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HB0098

In Opposition Of

State Retirement and Pension System – Forfeiture of Benefits

House Appropriations Committee

Hearing: January 23, 2024 – 2:00 p.m.

Dear Honorable Delegate Barnes, Chair, and Honorable Delegate Chang, Vice Chair, and other distinguished Appropriations Committee members,

The Maryland Retired School Personnel Association opposes HB 0098 State Retirement and Pension System – Forfeiture of Benefits.

MRSPA works to protect defined benefit pensions and a secure retirement for all Marylanders. The money invested in the pension system was accrued over a lifetime of work. This money was earned in years of service to the system in which they were employed. The money belongs to the individual earning it not to the system employing them.

The person committing the crime will receive a fair trial and will be subject to the will of the court. Nothing in the sentence includes punishment for the families involved. Although this bill includes some relief for these families, it also suggests years of litigation. This is not to say that punishment for the serious crimes described in this bill is not warranted. But this is the domain of the judicial system not of the legislature adding additional penalties. While we agree that Marylanders want state employees of all areas to be trustworthy and honest, penalizing the convicted after they have served their time or their unknowing family by taking away their means of income is not fair or justifiable.

Finally, false accusations, especially against teachers, are not an uncommon occurrence. It is difficult for a bill like this to provide provisions for recovering the losses incurred by a teacher or any former employee in this situation. A retired former state employee and/or their family is entitled to the pension into which they paid and worked to earn.

On behalf of the 12,000 members of the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association, we urge your opposition to HB 0098.

Sincerely,

Carla J. Duls
President

Virginia G. Crespo
Legislative Aide