

# Testimony of June Pinkin

President, Hartford Federation of Teachers – Retirees  
AFT Connecticut Local 1018R, AFL-CIO

Finance Revenue and Bonding Committee  
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## **S.B. 28: An Act Concerning Revenue Items to Implement the Governor’s Budget**

To Senator Fonfara, Representative Widlitz and Members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee. I offer this testimony in support of **S.B. 28, An Act Concerning Revenue Items to Implement the Governor’s Budget**. I do so on behalf of all of Connecticut’s retired public school teachers but especially for the approximately 500 teachers who are members of the Hartford Federation of Teachers Retiree Chapter of which I am president. We are in favor of reducing the state income tax on our pensions.

Connecticut is fiscally punitive in many ways when it concerns its retired public school teachers:

1) It is one of only five states that fully taxes teacher pensions.

2) It is one of the 15 states in which retired teachers are denied the usual benefits of Social Security. This was done through the S.S. GPO/WEP (Government Pension Offset/ Windfall Elimination Provision) legislation. This means that when a teacher works outside of teaching and earns forty or more Social Security credits, their benefits are reduced because of their state pensions. Also, when a spouse dies, no spousal benefit is provided to the retired teacher.

3) Retired teachers not on Medicare have extremely high health insurance premiums. Hartford teachers have to pay \$744 out of pocket per person per month in premiums plus they have copays. This is a big chunk of one’s pension! It reduces the pension by about \$9,000 per year for a single person and by \$18,000 for a couple. Many people assume we are getting the same benefits as state employees receive; **we are not!**

I feel compelled to point out that the cost of this partial state income tax exemption for retired teachers has, in a way, been “prepaid” in an amount that would support this legislation for years to come. I say this because the state has reneged on its commitment to our health care fund, a fund mainly supported by contributions from active teachers. Governor Malloy, since taking office, has “shorted” the fund by about \$35M so far and doesn’t plan to meet the state’s agreed upon obligation in this budget either. Governor Rell also shorted the fund by \$60M. The teachers have always contributed their share.

I urge you to support this legislation that proposes a partial income tax exemption on teachers’ pensions.

Thank you.