

February 9, 2022

RE: Testimony regarding HF 3136

Dear Members of the Committee,

My name is Virginia DeMun. I have been a nurse since 1980, and I have been an intensive care nurse with Hennepin Healthcare since 1985. I have worked for Hennepin County in a health care setting since I was 21 years old.

I have found myself in a situation re: the phase retirement option (PRO) and PERA. I started my PRO in May of 2021. I was told by my supervisor that I could work over my 40 hour appointment. Due to the pandemic and severe shortage of nursing staff this requirement was waived until December 31, 2021 by the legislature. We checked if this information was indeed correct and I was told I would not be penalized for working extra hours, which I did in July and August 2021.

I was notified by PERA on January 10, 2021 that I was in breach of PRO by working extra hours and would need to retire entirely from my job in order to continue receiving my retirement benefits.

Another penalty I was given was the requirement of returning approximately \$23,000 to PERA for money I had received for the months of September thru January from my retirement as I had continued working during that time having no idea I had lost my eligibility to continue the PRO.

I gave my notice to retire at the end of January so I would not stop receiving my earned monthly annuity. I had no intention of completely retiring from my job which I love, and I would never knowingly have put myself in this position.

This misinformation has had devastating effects on my life and livelihood.

My employer has been trying to rectify this situation since finding out about this predicament. The only way this can be resolved is through passing this legislation and making sure the exception goes back to the start of the pandemic, no matter the exact date someone retires. This would release me from the requirement of returning a large amount of money that was paid to me but also help others who are able to work more hours and help address our workforce shortage.

Thank you for your time and hope you will give this your consideration.

Virginia (Ginnie) DeMun, RN

vdemun@live.com