



Kentucky Association Professional Educators
P.O. Box 24506 Lexington, Kentucky 40524-4506

September 21, 2015

Mr. David Karem
Former Senator/Former Chair of Kentucky Board of Education

Dear Mr. Karem:

On behalf of our members, the Kentucky Association of Professional Educators (KAPE) would like to express our views regarding KTRS for the consideration of the work group.

First and foremost, KAPE understands that KTRS is of extreme importance to all teachers. KAPE also realizes that any issue of this magnitude is likely to garner a strong emotional response. However, KAPE believes that emotions should not rule the day. KAPE encourages this body to reassure the education community that, although major revamping may be required, KTRS is not in such dire consequence that rash action is required to ensure that immediate pension and insurance obligations are met. KAPE would like for members to take into account that Beau Barnes of KTRS stated in the most recent State Government Committee meeting that KTRS is solvent (with nothing done) for the next 21 years, give or take. KAPE would also like to remind this body that, in the same meeting, legislators vehemently stressed the need of stakeholder groups to share the above information with their members to ensure that undue worry and stress not be inflicted upon our teachers and retirees (many of whom are above the age of 80).

KAPE would also stress that this issue has been batted about for years already without any type of resolution. This has occurred, we believe, because no suggestion thus far has garnered bi-partisan support. That said, KAPE strongly suggests that a hybrid option plan be the focus of this body. The past two sessions have shown that the all or nothing approach, from either side, is not going to gain traction in the legislature.

Our goal is to ensure that the promises made to our current and retired teachers be kept. However, we also understand that, although educators do not pay into Social Security, they are ALL taxpayers. KAPE urges this body to consider the fiscal consequences of any plan set forth.

In conclusion, KAPE urges this body to consciously work toward recommendations that can realistically be expected to garner support in both the House and Senate - taking into account the obligations to not only our teachers and retirees, but also ALL taxpayers in the Commonwealth. Presenting a slightly modified version of a previously suggested solution does nothing to serve teachers and retirees as it will likely delay any meaningful dialogue or action on this important matter for yet another year.

Sincerely,

Ruth Green
Director