



## **OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR**

Vermont State House  
115 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05602

### **For Immediate Release:**

March 27, 2021

### **\*\*\*STATEMENT\*\*\***

#### **Statement of Lt. Governor Gray in Support of Vermont Teachers and State Employees**

**Montpelier, Vt.** —Today, Lt. Governor Gray released the following statement in support of Vermont teachers and state employees:

“The pension proposal that was made public on March 24, 2021, impacts the hard-earned retirement benefits of 10,000 Vermont teachers and 9,000 state employees who have committed their careers to service to our state and communities.

While I have not been at the negotiation table these last several months, I can appreciate the challenge at hand and the sincere effort put forward to address a compounding and dire unfunded liabilities crisis. Since the release of the proposal, my office has received an outpouring of deep concern and disappointment from teachers and state employees.

This proposal represents a broken commitment to our teachers and employees made at the time of hiring. Vermont’s teachers, in particular, have made extraordinary sacrifices during this pandemic, risking their health and safety to educate our children. I am concerned that the proposal does not reflect the value we place on their tireless work, dedication and commitment.

Those most impacted by this proposal are Vermont women. According to the Vermont-NEA, more than 75% of Vermont teachers are women. According to the Vermont State Employees Association, 51.2% of state employees are women. This proposal comes at a time when Vermont women continue to go without equal pay, paid family and medical leave, and access to affordable, quality childcare.

While I again recognize the monumental crisis posed by Vermont’s unfunded liabilities, I am concerned that this proposal unduly impacts women and fails to protect the benefits promised to current beneficiaries.

I encourage amendments to the proposal that center the needs and experiences of our teachers and state employees in the process as well as the value we place on their service. I also encourage consideration of the disparate impact of the proposal on the short-term and long-term economic well-being of Vermont women.

It goes without saying that Vermont’s demographic crisis, shrinking tax-base and workforce continue to exacerbate existing unfunded liabilities, I look forward to continuing to work with the Governor and the Legislature to offset this crisis through parallel strategic efforts to address both.”

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