



KEN KING

TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

District 88

November 13, 2020

To all school personnel both active and retired:

I am sure by now most of you are aware that I filed HB 430. The purpose of this bill is to do away with the broken TRS care/ active care system. This system was never meant to be sustainable therefore participants are forced to rely on the mood of the legislature every two years to prop it up. This has led to huge increases in premiums while the quality of the product itself erodes every year.

Over the last 3 years 41,000 retired teachers have left the system and paid for Medicare or private insurance out of pocket because the product we are offering them is so expensive and the insurance itself covers less all the time. As more people leave the system, the risk pool shrinks, causing premiums to rise. As a legislator I cannot in good faith continue to put a cash band aid on a broken system. Nor can I stand by and watch our active and retired teaches continue to live with horrible health care that is far too expensive. I for one am ready to find a better way to provide insurance to all school personnel while at the same time being a better steward of our tax dollars.

My proposal in broad strokes is as follows:

1. The legislature will provide a large enough Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) to allow our 65 and over retirees the ability to afford Medicare part A and B.
2. The legislature will create a runway for our 55-65 year-old participants to get to Medicare age.
3. The legislature will allow our Active teachers to join the Employee Retirement System (ERS) thereby increasing the risk pool, thus lowering premiums dramatically.
4. Allowing active teachers to share a larger risk pool and lowering premiums is a teacher pay raise that is truly sustainable.

Over the last several years I have spent countless hours discussing the inadequacies of TRS Care. While I will admit the plan I have briefly laid out has many hurdles to overcome as well as a huge cost, it is time to do something. The status quo is truly the epitome of doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result!

I would ask that all concerned parties understand that HB 430 cannot, on its own, accomplish the plan above. Very soon I will be filing a budget rider to pay for the plan, as well as corresponding legislation to support this effort. That being said, I intend full transparency in this process, meaning the proposal I have laid out is not the only way to fix this problem. I welcome any and all ideas. Lastly, I would like everyone concerned to know that I have never, nor would I ever attempt to pass anything that would damage our schools in any way. And I would certainly not do anything to harm our school employees who are entrusted with our most precious resource. I am committed to continue working towards a better future for all of our Texas teachers and school employees.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken King".

Ken King
State Representative
House District 88

CAPITOL OFFICE

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COUNTIES

Armonson, Bailey, Briscoe, Castro, Cochran, Donley, Gray, Hale, Hansford, Hemphill, Hockley, Lamb, Lipscomb, Ochiltree, Roberts, Swisher, Yoakum