



NEWS RELEASE

February 21, 2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KEA statement on Senate Bill 1

Senate Bill 1 (2018), the public pension bill introduced last night by Senator Joe Bowen, is significantly different from the governor's pension proposal that caused such strong negative reaction from stakeholders last fall.

In response to the release, KEA President Stephanie Winkler said, "KEA appreciates the governor's continued commitment to fully fund the state pension systems as evidenced by his Executive Branch budget proposal. However, keeping promises made to state employees is only part of the equation; the legislature also has a responsibility to find new, fair and sustainable means to generate revenue to appropriately fund all of Kentucky's vital public services.

"After reviewing SB 1, we are encouraged that some provisions show that its sponsor heard the voices of thousands of public school employees, retirees and other stakeholders who attended public forums with their legislators last fall. However, many provisions still exist that violate the inviolable contract and increase the financial burden on local school districts and public school employees. Structural changes and cost-shifting the legislature's financial obligations to public employees and ultimately, to local taxpayers is not the answer to the funding problem that plagues the entire state budget.

"Kentucky's students deserve high quality teachers and support staff, and pensions that are reliable and well-funded keep current educators in the classroom and attract new employees to the profession. We are not convinced that SB1, in its current form, achieves those goals. But there is time remaining in the session to have meaningful conversations about what might work, and SB1 offers a good framework for those discussions. We look forward to working with legislators in both chambers on this important issue."