

[H2577 Act relative to creditable service for school nurses](#)

Presenter: Filed on 1/18/23 by Representative [Kathleen R. LaNatra](#) of Plymouth

Status: Referred to the committee on Public Service

If this Bill is passed, it would correct the current inequity for School Nurses with regard to eligibility to access retirement benefits available to public school employees licensed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

MSNO supports this Bill because equal access to benefits should be available for all DESE licensed members of the Massachusetts Teacher Retirement System (MTRS).

- Unlike other school professionals, school nurses are required to work for a minimum of two years in child or community health before becoming initially licensed with DESE.
- For some, this prior clinical experience before school nursing can cumulate into decades of service that are often not reflected as such in school/district contracts or retirement eligibility.
- MTRS and State Retirement plans are the only retirement plans offered by public school systems, and require a certain number of years vested to become eligible for benefits.
- School nurses must thus work two extra years to be eligible for the same benefits as their public, charter, and collaborative school colleagues.
- Buy back of three years is available to others with no such licensure requirement (i.e. Peace Corp volunteers)
- Now, more than ever, we understand the importance of health in the school setting. In a time of a significant nursing shortage in Massachusetts, this Bill would help to ameliorate the disservice upon a group of people who have dedicated their lives to support student's health, safety and readiness to learn.

*This bill with the same language was filed in 2013, and again in 2015, 2017 and 2021. In 2022, both Senate and House reported favorably and the bill was discharged to committee on House Rules.*