

# Education Minnesota Voter Information: House District 58A

Dear educator,

Those elected this November will make decisions that directly impact your students, pocketbook, profession and union. Because of this, we wanted to provide some information on where the candidates for Minnesota House in your district stand on the issues educators have said they care about the most.

A candidate's position is sometimes more complicated than a "yes" or "no" answer. We have done our best to represent each candidate in a fair and reasonable way. Unless noted otherwise, the statements were taken from Education Minnesota's candidate questionnaire.

For educators seeking more specific information on their local candidate's positions on Education Minnesota's top priorities of pay, pensions and health care, the questionnaires are available at [www.edmnvotes.org](http://www.edmnvotes.org).

## Do you believe in fully and equitably funding public education, from preschool to postsecondary institutions, with several billion dollars in new education investments?

**Kristi Pursell**  
"Our children are the future of our community, and the quality of a child's education shouldn't depend on where they live! The public school I went to was excellent, and I want the same for my kids and yours. We must do what we can to provide young people with the tools they need to become our future workforce as they become adults. That means giving our students, educators, and schools the resources they need."

**Rita Hillmann Olson**  
When discussing school funding issues, Hillmann Olson said earlier this year, "So this 'fully funded' is a lie ... Yeah, it's got to be cut."<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>1</sup> X, 9/6/2024 Audio

## How would you support Minnesota's higher education system?

**Kristi Pursell**  
"I will continue to work towards increased access to free post-secondary education, and continue to work to refinance and forgive student loans, and ensuring paying off student loans can count as match for pensions for public employees."

**Rita Hillmann Olson**  
Blamed Biden's student debt forgiveness programs for the public's falling trust in college, "Trust in colleges falls to 36% ... Biden administration reinforces this stat with his continuous push to make us pay for other's student debt which the student contractually agreed to pay for what they rec'd in their college's program."<sup>2</sup>  
<sup>2</sup> Facebook, 9/3/23 Screenshot

## How will you support unions and address issues in collectively bargained contracts?

**Kristi Pursell**  
"Unions created the middle class, and I'm proud to have grown up in two single-income households who could afford to raise me because both of my parents were Education Minnesota union members. I remember seeing my folks on picket lines during strikes. I knew that collectively bargaining for rights and pay was key to being able to afford our lives and stay in my home."

**Rita Hillmann Olson**  
Hillmann Olson attacked Education Minnesota and encouraged teachers to opt-out, "Education MN is the Teacher's Union & its 'supposed' to be non-partisan! Check out the "vote" logo for Indivisible North. SMH  
Teachers, remember, you can opt out of the union. Are they representing you when they are endorsing school board members?"<sup>3</sup>  
<sup>3</sup> Facebook post, 7/31/23 Screenshot

## How will you support efforts to lower inequitable penalties in the Teachers Retirement Association to expand retirement options?

**Kristi Pursell**  
"I was the author of a bill that will most help newer teachers count their student loan payments as their contribution for the pension match so that even if these public servants have student debt, they can continue to save for retirement instead of having to choose one or the other."

**Rita Hillmann Olson**  
A careful review of Hillmann Olson's campaign website, social media, and public statements has revealed no clear plan to improve teacher's pensions.