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My wife and I, both state retirees, were told that the State would pay 100% of our health premium with ten years of participation in the State's health plan. However, under the current Medicare Advantage plan we are required to pay a monthly Medicare Part B premium of \$164.90 each. This amounts to \$3,957.60 a year, a considerable burden given the continuous decline in the real value of our pensions.

Over time, the lack of an adequate Cost-Of-Living Adjustment (COLA) to our pensions has resulted in a considerable loss of purchasing power (calculated using the Consumer Price Index published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). My pension would have to be nearly \$13,000 higher than it is now to equal the purchasing power of my pension for January 2008. My wife's pension would have to be \$5,600 higher to equal the purchasing power of her pension for January 2011. Any COLA on our pensions received since our retirement has been far surpassed by increases for individuals getting Social Security.

As the saying goes, "every little bit helps." Giving state retirees the health care benefits they were promised would help alleviate the decline in the real value of our pensions.