

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee. Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, members of the Labor and Housing Committee

My name is Steven Butterfield. I am retired, but I am not a State of Maine retiree. I retired in December of 2017 after a total of 42 years serving on the staff of the Maine Service Employees Association, SEIU Local 1989. My last 26 years was as their Director of Information Services.

During my tenure with MSEA-SEIU, I was appointed by Governors, State Senators, State Representatives and Union Presidents to a myriad of Committees, Commissions, Taskforces and Workgroups involving studies, redesigns and modifications to the Maine Public Employees Retirement System. Currently I am Governor Mills' appointee to the MainePERS Participating Local District Advisory Committee. Given all of this, I have a pretty good understanding of the State and Teacher Retirement Plan.

When it comes to the cost of living adjustment (COLA) portion of the pension system, state workers and teachers have taken more than their share of hits over the last several decades.

The McKernan Administration fired the first salvo back in the early 90's by putting state workers and teachers a year behind on their COLA by making new retirees wait a full year before becoming COLA eligible. Formerly new retirees were COLA eligible if they retired by August of any year. That Administration also imposed the 4% COLA cap.

Fast forward to 2011 and the LePage Administration lowered the boom even more severely!

Not only did the LePage Administration reduce the COLA cap from 4% to 3% they also added a \$20,000 cap on the amount of pension benefit that would be COLA eligible. Then they froze the COLA for 2 years. This was nothing more than financial terrorism for Maine's state worker and teacher retirees. The frozen COLAs added two more years of falling further behind financially.

Now with these added hindrances and the current rampant inflation, which is far more than even the current cap could sustain, we see our retirees who gave years of dedicated service to the citizens of the State of Maine falling into financial despair.

I urge you to fully fund the additional 6.1% of the 2022 9.1% MainePERS calculated COLA.

Let's show retired state workers and teachers that they ARE still appreciated!

Thank you for your time and I'll be happy to answer any questions you may have.