

69 Maple Ridge Drive  
Winthrop, ME 04364  
March 27, 2023

Senator Michael Tipping  
Representative Amy Roeder  
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing  
2 SHS  
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and Committee members:

I write today to request your support of LD 1096, An Act to Help Retired Teachers and State Employees Keep Pace with Inflation by Matching the Cost-of-Living Adjustment for Social Security Benefits.

This bill is a vital component of action necessary to rectify the budget gimmick of 2011; a gimmick which has wreaked havoc with the finances of State (including teachers) public sector retirees. While it never should have happened, the fact that it has continued for more than ten (10) years is nearly equally disturbing. Limiting a COLA, and the amount to which a COLA can be applied, is crippling for retirees. For anyone whose retirement benefit is equal to or in excess of \$24,186.25, a 3% COLA generates an increase of \$735.59. It doesn't take long for inflation (at 8.5%, the last I knew) to use and exceed that amount. As an example, nearly all of us have seen a recent and marked increase in the costs of electricity generation and distribution. The statutorily-limited COLA is less than half of the increase of my electricity costs for a twelve-month period. Many, many others are in the same boat...or in an even worse boat.

It is heartening that recipients of Social Security received a > 8% increase in the monthly benefit. State (including teachers) public sector retirees deserve the same consideration by way of utilizing the same pricing index.

Sadly, I believe that most current state employees and teachers are unaware of the existence of this arbitrary restriction until they near retirement or even until they retire. Current or recent retirees, while they may appear to be silent, are resentful and enraged. Please do not view silence as complacency. While some may be represented by an advocacy group, we all look to you, individually and as a legislative body, to right this wrong.

I ask you to thoughtfully consider this bill in your work session(s), to vote LD 1096 "Ought to Pass," to support it on the floor, and to work with the current Administration and MainePERS, as may be necessary, to rectify the existing situation.

Sincerely,

David W. Maxwell

cc: Senator Craig Hickman  
Representative Tavis Rock Hasenfus  
Representative Janice Dodge