

Heywood Petry
Blue Hill
LD 1920

My name is Woody Petry. I am retired and I live in Blue Hill. I am speaking today to encourage you to pass LD 1920 “An Act to Authorize a Supplemental Benefit Relief Payment” presented by Senator Nicole Grohoski of Hancock County.

This bill impacts me personally. In short, although I lived full-time in Maine for the majority of 2021; filed a Maine income tax return for 2021; paid property taxes in Maine for 2021 (and for the 2 preceding years); and met the income requirements... I was declared ineligible for the \$850 inflation relief payment because of a glitch in the way the bill was written. And because I had been deemed ineligible for that payment, I was also ineligible for the \$450 winter energy relief payment that followed.

To provide a little bit of background... I was born in Hartford and spent the first 28 years of my life in living in several New England states. I graduated from college in Maine. My job took me to a number of other states, including 27 years in Kentucky, but my dream was to move back to Maine after retirement. And I did it. I retired at the end of 2018, and we purchased our home in Blue Hill in May 2019.

The pandemic delayed us from selling our home in KY and moving full-time to Maine, although we actually lived in Maine for half of 2019 and almost all of 2020 because Maine was so forward-thinking about addressing the pandemic. We finally were able to sell the KY house in 2021 and got Maine driver’s licenses and became full-time Maine residents in June of 2021. We filed 2021 tax returns as Maine residents.

We were very excited to hear about the pandemic-driven inflation relief program in the State of Maine, and also about the winter energy relief program that followed. We are both retired and living on a fixed income of retirement savings and social security. Those funds would mean a lot! We met the income requirements for the payments, but because we were not “full-year residents” of Maine in 2021 (due to the pandemic) as defined in the bill, we did not qualify for the \$850 pandemic-driven inflation check. And due to that, we didn’t qualify for the \$450 winter energy relief payment.

You will realize that if something similar had been passed in Kentucky, we would not have qualified for that either, since we were residents of Maine for more than half of 2021 and less than half the year in Kentucky. Unfortunately, we had fallen in a crack in the system because of the way the bill was written.

Of course, that didn’t mean we weren’t impacted by inflation and over-the-top energy costs like other Mainers. For November thru March, our energy costs (electric and oil) averaged \$1075/month for 2021-22 and \$1339/month in 2022-23!

From this short summary of our situation, you can see that although we were “card-carrying” Maine residents for the majority of 2021, because our residency did not include the entire 365 days of 2021, we were not considered to be Maine residents. Thus we were not eligible for either of the two inflation and energy relief benefits. I urge you to support LD 1920 that corrects that inequity.

Thank you.