

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF

L.D. 111

AN ACT TO INCREASE THE STATE'S SHARE OF RETIRED
TEACHER HEALTH INSURANCE

February 12, 2025

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and members of the Labor Committee. I am Robbie Feinberg, the director of communications and government relations for Maine School Management Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and Maine School Superintendents Association in unanimous support of L.D. 111: An Act to Increase the State's Share of Retired Teacher Health Insurance.

Over the past few years, state legislators have gradually increased Maine's share of health insurance costs for our retired teachers and ed techs, and that figure now sits at 60 percent.

We are thankful for these previous efforts, but we know that these health insurance costs are still substantial and burdensome -- especially for retirees on fixed incomes. Increasing the state share of these expenses will directly save retired educators hundreds of dollars per year, offering them some financial breathing room at a time when the cost of living has risen dramatically.

This legislation is not only about relief for our retired educators, but also about the recruitment of our future teachers. We need to do what we can to bring more people into this profession.

The recent repeal of the Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset on the federal level was a meaningful change that will provide our retired educators with the Social Security benefits they deserve. This bill can offer further assurance to our teachers and staff that they will be supported and cared for after they retire, making this career path more appealing to students and helping to fill more positions across our state.