

March 24, 2025

Respectfully submitted to the Maine Labor Committee in support of **LD 1040 and LD 900**.

My name is Marion Bowman, I am a Chelsea resident. I am also a retired state employee. I am asking for your support to LD 1040 to raise the CAP on Retirement Benefits for certain state employees and Teachers to which a Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) is made and LD 900 an Act to Protect State Retiree Pensions from Inflation.

Maine Retirees need relief from the continuing damage committed in 2011 by the then Legislature and governor against Public Employees and our Pensions. The damage included a substantial cut in the BASE for COLA adjustments which lowered the CAP to a level below Inflation rates, and at-the-same-time also we suffered a 3-year COLA freeze, leaving many of us impacted by our Contractually prescribed pensions.

The stock market (since 2011) has since come back (to higher and lower records both over time) and nothing has been done to help correct those cuts or damage done to state employees, therefore I am requesting that you pass **LD 1040 and LD 900** to raise the Cost Of Living Adjustment (COLA) to be applied only on the FIRST 20K of pension to 40K to catch up and further compliment those employees who retired prior to 2011 as I did.

I also ask that you pass **LD 900 to raise the COLA CAP from 3% to 4% annually**, while in 2028-2029 increasing it to **5% (keeping up with Inflation rates) like Social Security**. Also, I am requesting that the 5% be applied to the FIRST 50K of Retirement Benefits for State Retirees and Teachers and to their Beneficiaries from that time onward. (Many were impacted by those 2011 cuts to service workers and many of them have now passed away I am sorry also to report!) Bringing the COLA's in-line with current Inflation Rates and applying it to the Base will be a significant help to all public employees- even the current COLA CAP of 3% does continue into the future – it will still help against the FIRST 40K of base! That will also assist with future recruitment issues, too, as Contractual Agreements and Promises are seen to be kept and our children watch and know where best to go to work, etc. (imho)

In my work Contract with the state, I was promised much more robust Pension Benefits than I have today and after 17 years of retirement. (18 years come July 2025) That said, there are many more who did not go to technical classes every year nor kept up with data processing classes in programming in college like I did for over 20 years and they are hurting more than I am today. I give **'them a voice'** here along with sharing my own viewpoints here, too! I was a Systems Engineer on IBM mainframes (titled Systems Software Specialist here in Maine for over 20 years as lesser pay than I could have made by moving) and a former Manager of Enterprise Operations & Monitoring (EOM) within OIT for 4-5 years and can tell you that while we could not find skilled technology workers in-state for what money the state offered but could then 'rely on COLA's' to help attract them (in retirement) along with a change of life lifestyle for them to want to come and work for the State of Maine at lesser pay - until 2011 along!) The state employees I worked with across all departments and agencies in technology support (and management) did work (their jobs) well to 'secure and protect' the state vital online business systems from inside and outside intrusions and more, and sometimes from managers and other agencies who did not understand technology well then either, too!

We were/are all citizens of Maine after all, too, and did beyond the expected every day on our work for Maine's citizens and other technical support teams and managers across Maine in "HEROIC" ways many times – as was identified by outside experts that were hired (on several occasions over the years) to review the 'Operations section' and how we did our work within O.I.T. Many of these employees performed duties beyond what was expected, and many times did so beyond their work hours as well. "Many state employees just always wanted to do a job right the first time!" They had contracts and a Pension Plan they could rely on they thought, and then came changes in government and stock markets, too.

Thank you for 'hearing me' today!