

TESTIMONY NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST

L.D. 900

OFFICERS

AN ACT TO PROTECT STATE RETIREE PENSIONS FROM INFLATION

March 26, 2025

PRESIDENT

Faye Anderson
RSU 22

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and esteemed members of the Committee on Labor, I am Steven Bailey, the executive director of the Maine School Boards Association, testifying on behalf of our legislative committee neither for nor against L.D. 900, An Act to Protect State Retiree Pensions from Inflation.

PRESIDENT-ELECT

Joseph Long
MSAD 35/RSU 35

Board members believe that the goals of this bill are admirable, and Maine must do what it can to assist its retired educators and ensure that they can continue to afford their cost-of-living when they leave the profession. Cuts to retiree benefits over previous decades have made life harder for thousands of retired educators, and this bill justifiably seeks to correct those unjust decisions, boosting the cost-of-living adjustment and having the adjustment apply to a greater amount of their retirement benefits.

VICE PRESIDENT

Roy Gott
RSU 24

These changes would help return Maine statutes on state retiree pensions back to what they were before 2011, when the state instituted the cap and reduced the cost-of-living adjustment to 3 percent.

**IMMEDIATE PAST
PRESIDENT**

Jane Osborne
Deer Isle-Stonington CSD

Retired educators deserve more security and support. However, our concern with this bill is in regards to its price tag. An amended version of a similar bill in the previous Legislative Session, L.D. 70, carried a price tag of close to \$750 million – including potential additional costs to schools. While our association supports the concept of this bill, we cannot do so at such a high price – and at a time when Maine faces such a challenging budget situation.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Steven W. Bailey

**MAINE COUNCIL OF
SCHOOL BOARD
ATTORNEYS**

Isabel Ekman, Esq., Chair

Maine school districts are already struggling with potential budget cuts and layoffs. The legislature should carefully consider any major spending bills such as this one when schools are struggling to hire teachers and maintain programming. While we care deeply about economic security for our retired educators, we must balance the needs of our schools, workers, and other important community needs.