



DATE: April 22, 2025
TO: Members of the Joint Committee on Labor and Housing
FROM: James Durkin, Legislative Director
AFSCME Council 93
RE: SUPPORT for LD 1638

Mark Bernard
Executive Director

Christopher P. Stockbridge
President

Kevin Drake
Vice President

Nancy Silva
Recording Secretary

Jack Wagner
Treasurer

Jason Hook
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On behalf of the more than 2,600 active members represented by AFSCME Council 93 and thousands of other retired members, I write to express our union's support for LD 1638 - *An Act Regarding Disability Retirement Benefits Under the Maine Public Employees Retirement System*.

On January 5, 2025, millions of public sector retirees celebrated as former President Biden signed into law the Social Security Fairness Act of 2025, thereby fully repealing the Social Security Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP).

President Biden's signature ended what is estimated to be the wrongful stripping of more than \$40 Billion dollars in Social Security benefits from public sector workers who were entitled to Social Security benefits from a non-public sector job. The legislation signed by President Biden also repealed a provision of the law that wrongfully stripped survivor benefits from spouses of Social Security beneficiaries. In both instances, individuals endured deep cuts to their benefits for decades, simply because they also earned a public pension benefit.

While the new federal law ended decades of unfair treatment for millions of Americans, unfortunately, a similar offset provision of Maine state law continues to harm a small group of Maine retirees, who are recipients of disability benefits from both the Social Security system and the Maine Public Employees Retirement System.

While the issues with the Maine law are quite complicated and only impact a small group of Maine residents, they are, nevertheless, resulting in economic hardship for seniors who served faithfully in public sector positions. Moreover, like those who were harmed by the WEP and GPO, it appears as though this small group of retirees are being harmed, simply because they receive benefits from a public pension system.

As such, we respectfully urge the committee to take an in-depth look at this problem and strive to find a fair solution that will provide economic relief for the individuals who are impacted.

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions our would like to discuss this matter in greater detail, please do not hesitate to contact me anytime day or night at 978-866-2283.