



Testimony

In Support Of

LD 2169: *An Act to Improve the Public Employees Disability Retirement Program by Modifying Provisions Controlling the Reduction of Benefits and Clarifying Terminology*

Jan Kosinski, Government Relations Director, Maine Education Association

Before the Labor Committee

February 3, 2026

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and distinguished members of the Labor Committee,

My name is Jan Kosinski, and I serve as the Director of Government Relations for the Maine Education Association (MEA). The MEA represents nearly 24,000 educators. Our members include teachers and other educators in nearly every public school in the state, full-time faculty, and other professional and support staff in both the University of Maine and Community College systems, and thousands of retired educators.

I offer this testimony today on behalf of the MEA in SUPPORT of LD 2169, *An Act to Improve the Public Employees Disability Retirement Program by Modifying Provisions Controlling the Reduction of Benefits and Clarifying Terminology*.

The MEA appreciates the diligent efforts of the staff and leaders at the Maine Public Employees Retirement System (MainePERs) to make marked improvements in the disability program of the System. After many years of MEA members and plan participants raising concerns about the problems in the MainePERs disability system, we worked together in 2021 to pass LD 1644, *An Act To Improve the Disability Retirement Program of the Maine Public Employees Retirement System*, sponsored by Senator Dave Miramant, a former member of this Committee. The bill was signed into law on June 17, 2021.

I can confidently report that since this bill became law, we have seen a marked difference in the number of complaints we receive from members engaging in the disability determination process. In fact, the attorneys who work with our members on these types of cases report the process is now fairer, impartial, and far more objective than what they experienced prior to 2021. While the System is not perfect, and there are certainly some who feel aggrieved by outcomes, we can confidently state the System is now operating the disability program with far more oversight and accountability.

The bill before you represents a number of specific and technical changes MainePERs seeks to make to the disability system. We appreciate MainePERs staff reaching out to us and



Maine Education Association
Jesse Hargrove President | Beth French Vice President | Jaye Rich Treasurer
Rebecca Cole NEA Director | Rachelle Bristol Executive Director

explaining each component. After this outreach, the staff at MEA combed through each proposed change and evaluated the impact. We are glad to report that we feel each change will be a positive improvement for the teachers and educators in the MainePERs plan.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.