

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and members of the Labor and Housing Committee:

My name is Lorraine Mahoney and I am retired from RSU 18 as a fourth grade teacher of 34 years. I live in Norridgewock, Maine, where I am the legislative chair for the Somerset Education Association Retired.

I am here to ask you to raise the COLA cap so we can get the COLA on the full pension.

For many, the struggle to pay bills, eat nutritional food , buy medicine, pay pet costs and try to find enjoyment has escalated. Many feel that they have worked hard to have a good retirement but changes to the rules of payment to these retirees changed, making it more difficult to live.

Many older retirees received beginning salaries of 3500 dollars. Increasing that amount took many, many years. Also, many of these same teachers worked weekends and summers to make ends meet, when they weren't taking courses to be up to date on current teaching practices. Those jobs often subtracted social security from their pay. They thought that might be a supplement to the pension. The rules changed which meant the pension would not be what they expected. Others had spouses who worked as well and they thought they would have a good retirement. However, a spouse died and the social security that the spouse earned ceased to be in full.

Those are big blows to the budgets of many.

So, you can see that the COLA payment on the full pension is important to these retirees as well as those trying to live independently. Please give this your full attention. Thank you for your consideration to this important matter.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorraine Mahoney, legislative chair SEAR.

2/13/2023