

March 28, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in reference to LD 1096. My name is June Burt and I retired from teaching in 2015 at the age of sixty-seven after teaching for thirty years. Currently, I am in my sixth year of being an Ed. Tech. in the Brewer School Department. I enjoy working with students at this age, but to be honest with you, I am working to keep up with the rising cost of living and care for my chronically ill husband.

When I turned sixty-five, and was still teaching, I began to receive one thousand dollars a month from Social Security. I had worked outside in the private sector and had earned a benefit. This certainly helped out as my husband needed to retire at age sixty-two. Upon retirement as a Maine teacher that benefit went away and I was required to pay for my medicare out of pocket. When I turned seventy, I called Social Security and asked them to recalculate my benefit. I now get my medicare paid with sixty-one dollars put into my checking account. If my husband should pass before me I will lose out on most, if not all, of his social security benefit. I realize this is a federal issue and not related to LLD 1096, but when you think about it, money coming in or not is all related to my pocketbook.

In preparation for the future, my husband and I decided to sell our home and move into an apartment several years ago. As you know, the rents are rising as well as food costs. The current COLA rate for retired teachers is not enough to keep up with rising costs of housing and other essential expenses. Many Maine retired teachers, not just me, are struggling to make ends meet. Raising the COLA rate to match what Social Security provides will help myself and other retired teachers live more comfortably and with dignity.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration of this increase. I realize there is only so much money in the state budget. It is only fair that Maine retired teachers, who have dedicated their lives to educating and shaping our youth, retire with the same COLA increase as others.

Sincerely,
June Burt