



Henry L. Ingwersen  
Senator, District 32

**THE MAINE SENATE**  
131st Legislature

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Augusta, Maine 04333

*Testimony of Senator Henry Ingwersen presenting*  
**LD 1152, An Act to Make Long-term Disability Insurance Coverage Available to Public Employees**  
*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing*

Tuesday, April 4, 2023

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and esteemed members of the Joint Committee on Labor and Housing. My name is Senator Henry Ingwersen, and I represent Senate District 32, including the City of Biddeford and the Towns of Arundel, Dayton, Lyman, and Hollis. I come before you today to present and speak in support of LD 1152: An Act to Make Long-Term Disability Insurance Available to Public Employees.

My passion for this topic of Maine Public Employees Retirement System (MainePERS) Disability and my desire to see changes stems from my former career as a public school teacher. My friend and colleague Bob Sprankile was suffering the after-effects of nerve damage from a hernia operation in the middle of a successful teaching career. Despite constant and excruciating pain, he did not qualify for disability and was forced to continue to work, often resting on a cot between classes. He finally could not work anymore despite still not receiving disability from MainePERS. The consequences for Bob and his family had an awful and tragic ending.

The current disability plan for MainePERS does not include a long-term disability plan. Under section 43 of LD 1644 passed in 2021, MainePERS convened a stakeholder group called the Disability Working Group, "charged with advising MainePERS on the development of a Long Term Disability implementation plan, accompanying legislation and report to the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing by January 3, 2023. This bill, LD 1152, replicates version 2 of draft legislation prepared as a result of the Disability Working Group.

If implemented, this bill as written would require the Maine Public Employees Retirement System to offer long-term disability insurance coverage and would require employers to provide the coverage at employers' expense to members of the system and certain employees who participate in the system's defined contribution plan or to provide substantially equivalent coverage obtained from another source.

I want to personally thank the members of the Disability Working Group for their hard work which resulted in the Long-Term Disability Insurance Implementation Plan and this legislative draft. Members included representatives of the Professional Firefighters of Maine, the Maine Municipal Association, the Maine Association of Police, AFSCME Council 93, the Maine Association of Retirees, the Maine Service Employees Association, the Maine Department of Administrative and Financial Services, the Maine State Troopers Association, the Maine School Management Association, the Maine State Law Enforcement Association, the Governor's Office, the Maine Education Association, and MainePERS.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this legislation. I will defer more difficult questions regarding this legislation to those following me who have more expertise.