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Testimony of Rep. Jan Dodge in support of
**LD 1499, An Act Regarding Penalties for Early Retirement for Certain
Members of the Maine Public Employees Retirement System**
Before the Labor and Housing Committee

Good morning, Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and distinguished members of the Labor and Housing Committee. My name is Jan Dodge, and I represent House District #39, Belfast, Northport and Belmont. I am before you today as a cosponsor of **LD 1499, An Act Regarding Penalties for Early Retirement for Certain Members of the Maine Public Employees Retirement System.**

The purpose of this bill is to correct yet another painful penalty for state employees caused by the budget balancing actions taken by the Maine State Legislature in 2011 and 2012. That action was an increase in the penalty from 2.25% up to a 6% penalty imposed on one's retirement benefit for each year under the age of 62. This bill applies to a much smaller subset than some you have heard this session, but it will utilize the 2.25% penalty on that select number of years resulting in an increase in pension amounts. Section one of the bill outlines the four criteria.

It is disturbing to have pension injustices revealed. It is of much concern when those injustices are not acknowledged. It is incredibly disheartening when corrections and justice take decades. There is a song whose lyrics include: "To fight for the right without question or pause... and the world will be better for this..." We have had questions, and there has been quite a "pause" while our retirees have suffered.

My thanks to each member of this committee who has heard these bills outlining the breadth of our retirees' situation and for your acknowledgement of the unfairness they are suffering with their retirement compensation.

Please pass LD 1499. I hope this bill will join the LD 1230 compact concerning the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Dodge "Trifecta of Retiree Pension Justice" bills! This suite of legislation will improve the lives and finances of retired Maine State Employees. Their worlds will be better for this. Thank you.