

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and other esteemed members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee

My name is Bob Jean from Rockland. I am a retired teacher with 38 years of service in Maine's Public Schools and I am also the new President of Maine Education Association-Retired which represents well over 5,000 retired educational personnel across the state.

Retirees' pensions are their lifeline. Unfortunately, we are in the position of constantly trying to catch up as we watch the value of our benefits decrease. The cap on our COLA, the taxable portion of our pensions, health insurance costs, and inflation all play roles in contributing to this decline. The hits keep coming from all sides.

In the last 2 years some small steps have been taken to try to improve the situation. While we are grateful for those efforts we feel that more could be and should be done. Moving forward with LD1773 would offer another glimmer of hope to some of our retirees who are really struggling. It may not seem like much to some, but another \$20-30 dollars in one's monthly paycheck could be a big deal for those who are struggling.

In observance of Teacher Appreciation Week, it would be a great gesture of appreciation if this committee seriously considered supporting this bill to help the educators who have devoted numerous years of service to our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Bob Jean
Rockland
President- MEA-Retired