

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs and other esteemed members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee, my name is Gary McGrane and I live in the town of Jay. I retired as an educator from the University of Maine in 2015. After retirement I continued to be active in the Maine Education Association – Retired group of educators; first as Secretary, then as President-elect then as President. I have rounded out my career in education by helping others less fortunate whose retirement benefits have been eroded by the Windfall Elimination Protection and/or the Government Pension Offset.

I understand we cannot change these detrimental pieces of federal legislation today; however, you can try and make our MEA members whole by restoring the debilitating effects of inflation. I am here today in support of restoring our members' buying power. We are not asking for a raise we are simply asking that our educators be allowed to retire with the full buying power of their state pension. Unfortunately, many of our members cannot retire because their retirement income has not kept pace with inflation.

Therefore, I am here today to testify neither for nor against the Governor's proposed change package to LD 258, specifically related to part HHHHH of the proposal. It is my understanding that Part HHHHH proposes a one-time, ad hoc COLA of 3% for retirees. While we appreciate the proposal, we fear it is not enough to provide the support retired teachers and state employees need. I implore you to find a way to help these dedicated workers to be able to retire with dignity and respect. Thank you for your consideration in making this ad hoc adjustment permanent.

**Respectfully submitted,
Gary McGrane, Immediate Past President of MEA-Retired**