

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and other esteemed members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee-

My name is Bob Jean from Rockland. I am a retired elementary teacher with 38 years of service in Maine Public Schools. I am also the President of Maine Education Association- Retired, an organization that represents well over 5,000 members statewide.

I'm here to testify neither for nor against the Governor's proposed change package to LD 258 as it relates to part HHHHH of the proposal. That part proposes a one-time ad hoc COLA of 3% for retirees. We truly appreciate this, however, it does not go far enough in addressing the real problem. The 3% cap on our COLA, which only applies to part of our pensions, is the real culprit. Until we find a way to remove the cap, even if it's in incremental steps, our retirees will continue to fall behind as their pensions continue to lose value each year. It's difficult playing from behind all the time. It's demoralizing.

So, yes, we appreciate the Governor's proposal but we can't depend on one-time fixes. We know those can't be guaranteed from year to year. Retired educators are looking forward to the day that work begins on dealing with the unfair COLA cap.

Thank you for your time and thank you for your service to the citizens of Maine!

Bob Jean