



## Maine Education Association

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### Testimony

#### In Support Of

**LD 89: Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Chapter 201: Employer Reporting and Payments, a Major Substantive rule of the Maine Public Employees Retirement System.**

**John Kosinski, Government Relations Director, Maine Education Association**

**Before the Labor Committee**

**January 21, 2025**

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and other esteemed member of the Labor Committee,

My name is Jan Kosinski, and I am the Director of Government Relations for the Maine Education Association (MEA). The MEA represents nearly 24,000 educators, including teachers and other educators in nearly every public school in the state, as well as full-time faculty and other professional and support staff in both the University of Maine and Community College systems. Thousands of retired educators continue their connection and advocacy work through the MEA- Retired program.

I am here on behalf of MEA in support of support *LD 89, Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Chapter 201: Employer Reporting and Payments, a Major Substantive Rule of the Maine Public Employees Retirement System*. We hope the Committee will vote unanimously "ought to pass" on this important update to the rules of the MainePERS system.

MainePERS continues to be a high-functioning, professional and efficient quasi-agency of state government. The staff there provide a tremendous service to our members – both current retirees and those working in classrooms today who one day hope to retire. The staff is always courteous, knowledgeable, accessible, objective and nonpartisan. We appreciate the work they do and the way they do it.

This rule change will provide MainePERS staff with an additional tool to ensure school districts are providing the System with what they need to perform their duties as we expect. There have been some instances where school districts provided incomplete or inaccurate information to MainePERS regarding the contributions of teachers or ed techs in the System. Obviously, this is troubling. For MainePERS to advise members (i.e., future retirees) of their benefit levels and what they can expect when they retire, the System must have accurate data.

It is important to note, the overwhelming majority of school districts regularly pay MainePERS the required contributions and report these contributions impeccably and accurately. However, for the sake of all teachers and ed techs, we want to make sure their contributions are reliably tracked, forwarded and accounted for with the MainePERS and the proposed rule will give the MainePERS staff a stick to ensure compliance. We are confident the System staff and the MainePERS Board will use every carrot they can to ensure they are getting what they need from school districts before assessing late fees and interest payments.

Thank for your time and your attention and your service to the people of Maine. I will do my best to answer any questions you may have.

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