

Good Morning, Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and other members of the Labor Committee,

My name is Dotty Hinckley and I live in Pittston. I am here to testify in support of LD 111.

I support this bill and I am hopeful that you will also after hearing why it is important to me that the state supports an increase in the state share of the retired teacher healthcare program.

I retired from my school district after 50 years. I wore many different hats over those 50 years. PE Teacher, Ed Tech, Administrative Assistant, and Coach of 4 different sports. I was just a few months into my 49th year when I was diagnosed with cancer. It was also during the COVID Pandemic. I was rarely out sick over those 50 years, so I had plenty of sick days to cover the time I needed to go to radiation and chemo treatments. I beat cancer, but now I'm still dealing with after affects.

In April 2024, I came down with septic arthritis because the treatments for the cancer weakened all my joints. I was in the hospital and the rehab nursing home for 75 days. I'm still dealing with that and trying to be able to walk again. I've had to deal with doctor appointments, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and medications. I've had to have special aids to be able to get myself so I can walk normal again.

All these appointments and aids have co-pays. If we could get a 5% raise this year and again next year, it would certainly help me pay the cost of medications and co-pays that keep increasing. When I retired, I had sufficient savings, but that is dwindling down fast because of all the medical stuff we have to deal with.

Now on another note, my husband is on the heart transplant list, and he wears an LVAD. S we have to pay a lot of co-pays for him as well. We both have to travel to specialists. Between my cancer and my septic arthritis, I have 10 different specialists and my husband has 12. Some of his are also out of state.

This bill would personally help! This is one thing legislators can do to put more money into the pockets of retired people who dedicated their lives to education in Maine. YOU can help us secure the health care benefits that are needed.

I would like to thank all of you for listening to me and consider passing this bill.