



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002  
(207) 287-1440  
TTY: (207) 287-4469

## **Benjamin C. Hymes**

318 Birches Road  
Waldo, ME 04915  
Phone: (207) 808-3413  
Benjamin.Hymes@legislature.maine.gov

*Testimony of Rep. Benjamin Hymes*

### **L.D. 888, "An Act to Expand Property Tax Relief for Veterans and Survivors of Veterans"**

*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation*

March 13, 2025

Good morning, Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation.

I am Representative Benjamin Hymes, proudly representing House District 38. I am here to present **LD 888, "An Act to Expand Property Tax Relief for Veterans and Survivors of Veterans"**.

This bill is truly bipartisan and well-vetted. During the 131st Legislature, I worked with colleagues across the aisle for months to refine it. It passed unanimously in both chambers, was funded out of appropriations, and only failed enactment due to a last-minute veto by the Chief Executive. Since retiring in 2022 after 20 years of active duty, I have made it my mission to support veterans—this bill is a key part of that effort.

Why is expansion needed?

Currently, property tax relief for veterans is limited. Eligible veterans—those 62 or older who served in a recognized war period, those with a 100% VA disability rating, or those disabled during service—receive a \$6,000 exemption, while veterans with a federal grant for specially adapted housing receive \$50,000. However, this exemption applies to property value, not the tax bill itself, meaning actual savings amount to roughly \$100 per year—hardly meaningful relief.

LD 888 proposes three key changes:

1. Expands eligibility to all veterans over 62, not just those who served in armed conflicts. At this age, the exemption would be granted at the minimum level if no other qualifying factors apply.
2. Ties property tax relief to a veteran's disability rating before age 62. Since disability ratings directly impact a veteran's ability to work, relief should be proportionate to their service-connected disability. The VA system already tracks these ratings, making implementation straightforward.

3. Removes the armed conflict requirement. A service-related disability is a service-related disability, whether sustained during training stateside or in combat. If an injury occurred in service to our country, it should qualify.

This bill carries a previously calculated fiscal note of approximately \$4 million. Given its unanimous passage last session and the fact that it was fully funded before the veto, I am hopeful we can finally get this across the finish line.

I want to thank Representatives Roberts, Collamore, Collings, and Perry for their work on this bill last session, as well as this committee for its diligence in refining it.

Thank you for your time, and I am happy to answer any questions.

Benjamin Hymes  
State Representative