

Diane Bailey  
Vassalboro  
LD 328

To: Senator Michael Tipping, Chair  
Representative Amy Roeder, Chair  
Members, Committee on Labor

RE: Testimony in Support of LD 328, An Act Requiring the State to Pay a Retired State Employee's or Retired Teacher's Premium for Medicare Part B Under Medicare Advantage

Good morning, Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and Members of the Committee on Labor. My name is Diane Bailey and I live in Vassalboro, Maine. I am a former 40-year State government employee. Shortly after my State retirement, I returned to the workforce and 11 years later am still employed in order to supplement my public service pension. The decision to return to work was based on changes that occurred for medical insurance and promised pension benefits.

My employment with the State of Maine started in 1972 and I was provided by the Bureau of Human Resources materials on my benefits as an active and also, retired employee. The information included the "promise" of fully paid health insurance. As an active employee, I was assured verbally and in writing that when I met the eligibility requirements to receive a pension from MainePERS my health insurance coverage would continue with no premium cost as a retiree. Unfortunately, this agreement changed and I am now required to pay \$185.00 monthly for Medicare Part B in order to be able to continue with my Aetna Medicare Advantage Plan.

The State of Maine already fully pays 100% of premium including the cost for Medicare Part B for several hundred public service retirees. However, the remaining retirees are required to pay their own Part B for the same medical insurance coverage. This certainly seems unfair especially for those retirees who were "promised" fully paid health insurance at time of hire. I enjoyed working in the public sector but would not have spent 40 years in State employment without believing I would be entitled to certain benefits upon retirement.

Additionally, combined with the changes that occurred in 2011 to the retirees annual COLA increase and knowing you now have to pay for Part B creates a significant financial hardship for many public service retirees who rely on MainePERS pension as their only source of income. I urge the Committee to vote favorably on LD 328.  
Thank you