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THE MAINE SENATE
130th Legislature

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Testimony in Support of LD 190
An Act To Amend the Laws Governing Retirement Benefit Reductions for Corrections Officers
Currently Included in the 1998 Special Plan

Presented to the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing
Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Senator Rafferty, Representative Sylvester, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing,

My name is Troy Jackson and I have the honor of serving as the President of the Maine Senate and of representing northern Aroostook County. I am here today to lend my full support to LD 190 "An Act To Amend the Laws Governing Retirement Benefit Reductions for Corrections Officers Currently Included in the 1998 Special Plan."

The purpose of this bill, LD 190, is to include those few state correctional workers who are not included in the 1998 Special Plan for Retirement. As background, the original intent behind creating the 1998 Plan was to recognize the fact that certain public sector jobs, such as those in law enforcement, are inherently more dangerous and stressful than others. The mental and physical toll of guarding and protecting other officers and those under the care of the Department of Corrections is extremely burdensome. Therefore, it is unreasonable to expect these workers to maintain their health and stay on the job until what is considered "normal" retirement age. Unfortunately, the 1998 Plan did not include all correctional facility workers. This bill is an attempt to mitigate that oversight.

Undoubtedly, as those who testify after me will make plain, the 1998 Special Plan is very complicated; which is why, from time to time, the Legislature recognizes those state employees who should be added to this Plan. Each time, a new cost analysis must be done because the number of workers who may have qualified in the past has decreased.

In closing, I ask you to consider adding these dedicated workers to the 1998 Special Plan for Retirement. Now is the time to recognize their dedication and the service they provide to the State. I am happy to answer any questions, but I suspect there are those who will follow me who are better prepared to share specific facts and circumstances. Thank you.