



# ***MAINE AFL-CIO***

***A Union of Unions Standing for Maine Workers***  
*21 Gabriel Drive, Augusta, Maine 04330*



*(207) 622-9675*

*Visit our website: [www.maineaflcio.org](http://www.maineaflcio.org)*

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## **Testimony of Maine AFL-CIO Legislative & Political Director, Adam Goode, in Support of LD 1041, “An Act To Include Certain Mental Health Workers under the 1998 Special Plan for Retirement”**

Senator Hickman, Representative Sylvester and members of Labor & Housing Committee, my name is Adam Goode. I'm the Legislative and Political Director of the Maine AFL-CIO. We represent 40,000 working people in the state of Maine. We work to improve the lives and working conditions of our members and all working people. We testify in support of LD 1041.

This bill adds public sector mental health workers who provide direct care in a community-based or residential setting or to residents or patients of mental health institutions to the 1998 Special Plan for MEPERS members.

Working people who serve the public as mental health workers perform emotional strenuous and physically demanding work. These workers provide a great public benefit to everyone while facing danger, risking injury and being exposed to communicable diseases daily. It is a hallmark of the labor movement that working people should be able to retire with dignity and respect. This bill helps correct an inequity that has only increased as mental health workers have seen the risks of their work increase in recent years, both before and especially during the pandemic.

We are aware that there are other efforts before this committee to make changes to the 1998 Special Plan that benefit working people. As you work on fixing the problems with the system that result in workers being left out of the opportunity to retire with dignity and respect, we ask that you make sure mental health workers providing direct care in state corrections facilities and psychiatric centers be included.