



**Plymouth, Maine 04969
[207] 944-5366**

Green
District Vice President
Fire Fighters of Maine
Ridge Road
Ronnie
4th
Professional
226

LD 1103 "An Act To Allow a 5-year Open Enrollment in the Participating Local District Retirement Program for Certain Law Enforcement Officers, Firefighters and Other Municipal Employees"

April 9, 2021

Senator Hickman, Representative Sylvester, and Members of the Labor and Housing Committee. My name is Ronnie Green and I reside in the town of Plymouth.

I am currently a District Vice President with the Professional Fire Fighters of Maine representing well over 1000 full-time career Firefighters, EMT's, Paramedics, inspectors, dispatchers and mechanics across the State of Maine who belong to the International Association of Fire Fighters.

I am here today to speak neither for nor against *LD 1103 "An Act To Allow a 5-year Open Enrollment in the Participating Local District Retirement Program for Certain Law Enforcement Officers, Firefighters and Other Municipal Employees"*

I would like to thank Senator Bailey for sponsoring this bill and looking out for our police officers, firefighters and other municipal workers.

Some of what I will say you might find familiar as it closely mirrors my testimony on a similar bill a week or so ago.

Not too often but periodically I hear from a firefighter I represent that they made a choice when they were hired not to join MPERS. The reasons vary from: "I didn't know what to do", "I didn't plan on staying here", "HR told me this was best for me", and so on. Now that they've realized they made the wrong choice they want to know how to reverse it, and unfortunately, I tell them they are stuck unless they move on to a new employer.

I think we all make decisions we regret from time to time, and I really believe in second chances. I think it is really sad that someone made a choice based on confusion or mis information in the first few days of their career that they are stuck with for the remainder of their career. With that being said, I think it would be the right thing to do to allow these people a second chance.

The reason I am speaking neither for nor against is that I also feel that it is only fair to the retirement system and all of its current members that these people if given the opportunity, buy back all of their time and pay into the system everything that it will take to make up for them not contributing all along. Or their time in the system start the day they sign up, for instance, if a person had been employed for three years when they elect to join, they would have to work and contribute for 25 more years before they would be eligible to retire.

Our friends and staff at MPERS have done an excellent job in making sure our retirement system runs without glitches and is financially stable well into the future, and I trust their sound judgement in guiding us through this legislation.

Thank You for your time and I will be happy to answer any questions.

Ronnie Green