

185 Range Hill Road
Poland, Maine 04274
February 14, 2023

Senator Michael Tipping
Representative Amy Roeder
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing
2 SHS
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and Committee members:

I write today to request your support of LD 70, An Act to Eliminate the Cap on Retirement Benefits for State Employees and Teachers to Which a Cost-of-living Adjustment Is Made.

The cap on retirement benefits for cost of living adjustments for state employees was proposed and passed in the state budget in 2011. It was a budget gimmick that the Administration at the time categorized as necessary to balance the budget, and promised it would be reversed. Twelve years later, the cap is still in place during a time of record inflation in excess of 8.5%. Removal of the cap will not make retirees whole; the maximum COLA allowed by statute is 3%. Social Security and other federal and state retirement systems can and have increased their COLA's to the rate of inflation. The cap is a double penalty for Maine state retirees, because the COLA doesn't apply to annual benefits above \$24,186 and is capped at only 3%. My retirement income is being eroded both by inflation due to the cap on cost of living increases, and the cap on COLA increases above an arbitrary salary number. Please remove these caps and allow state retirees to enjoy the same benefits that the Social Security and other retirement systems provide for their members.

I had a 35 year career in state government protecting the public's health and safety. I ask you to protect my retirement income and my health and safety now. I ask you to vote LD 70 "Ought to Pass," to support it on the floor, and to work with the current Administration and MainePERS, as may be necessary, to restore our lost retirement benefits and stop the erosion of my fixed income.

Sincerely,

Mark Hyland

cc: Senator Eric Brakey
Representative David Boyer