

Hello,

This is Mark James writing on my own time in support of LD 483, An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Retirement Benefit Reductions for Certain Employees Currently Included in the 1998 Special Plan, sponsored by Rep. Pluecker.

I don't know what exactly to say. I could start with it has been a part of the changes long enough for it to be old news.

I could point out that a similar bill passed a few years back, but only applied to the Sgt's and Corrections Officers due to the wording of our "Direct care stipend" part of our pay. It is my understanding that the intention of the legislature was that it also applies to us. That was not the case.

I could point out that last year it went to the Appropriations Committee, but was not worked on further as they had an early recess (April I believe).

It is a relatively small group with a small impact on the budget.

Right now if an employee were to have something medically happen the Retirement Bureau would tell them they are eligible for regular retirement (with reductions) but not a medical retirement due to the "25/55" in the retirement plan (This happened to me as I had a major stroke in 2020 and missed almost 1 year at work) if they are over 55. With the wording of so many thing regarding retirement one must meet the "and otherwise qualify for a full retirement", so I must work till I am 63 for an otherwise 62 retirement.

Some Counties in Maine have a 25 year retirement with no age requirement, we are losing good people to these systems at a time when we need them most.

I could talk about "fairness", that has nothing to do with compensation on so many levels and only muddies the water.

I could talk about how long this has been pending, but the past is the past and this is something that needs fixing now, no matter when it started.

We could talk about people get sick earlier in Corrections and die earlier in Corrections, while true I'm not sure it applies to this argument.

I started in January 1987 as a Corrections Officer and worked up the ranks to Captain.

I have been here a long time.

I do like my job, but I am tired and there are younger people here who deserve to move up.

I would like to spend more time with my family, before I can't.

I really don't know what to say, I had conversations with former Representative Patrick Corey about this and he supported it. Mr. Corey said I explained it in a way that cleared the air.

I hope this letter helps explain why LD 483 needs to be passed and funded.

Thank You,  
Mark James