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Good Morning and thank you for giving us an opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Jeremy Roberts, I work as a Correctional Trades Instructor at Bolduc Correctional Facility. I started at Maine State Prison in 2010. I was an FTO training new staff for 3 years and have been an AFSCME union rep for 5 years. I am providing testimony on my own behalf and do not speak for the MDOC.

In today's world where it's financially adventurous to change jobs every 3 to 5 years to get a 10 to 20% increase in pay. Where your employer is only going to offer you a 2 to 4% increase in yearly compensation. A retirement plan that's 30plus years away no longer carries any weight in retaining employees. Add to the fact that Officers are starting on step 3 of 8 to help make the starting pay competitive with surrounding county jails. Now employees top out in 5 years and only get pay increases through contractual cost of living adjustments. A straight 25 year retirement would retain staff, especially younger staff that otherwise are looking at 30 to 37 years till retirement eligibility.

A direct example was a Correctional officer class in 2022. A class of 4 was on their final weeks of on job training when it was explained to them the retirement was both 25yrs and age 55. 2 of the 4 where 18 and 19. They got the retirement plan clarified through HR. Looking at 36 and 37 years till retirement, they both quit on the spot. Thousands of dollars on training spent and gone.

Removing the age for retirement is one of a few steps we hope the state considers to retain and recruit employees to fill critical vacancies within your Correctional facilities around the state.

Thank you for your time
Jeremy Roberts