



STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
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AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0001

Paul R. LePage
GOVERNOR

1 August 2017

The 128th Legislature of the State of Maine
State House
Augusta, ME

Dear Honorable Members of the 128th Legislature:

Under the authority vested in me by Article IV, Part Third, Section 2 of the Constitution of the State of Maine, I am hereby vetoing LD 1396, "An Act To Remove Certain Restrictions Imposed on Retired State Employees Who Return to Work as Educators."

This bill would reverse the progress we have made as a state to crack down on double-dipping and abuse by a small segment of public employees. I believe in the basic principle that no public employee should be entitled to receive a paycheck as well as retirement benefits at the same time from the same public employer for the same job. It makes no sense to me how members of the legislature disagree with this basic principle.

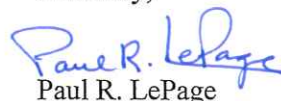
Before I became governor, this kind of abuse was rampant. Superintendents of schools would retire on a Friday, then come back to work in the same job on the following Monday, collecting both a salary and their public retirement benefits. If the system creates incentives for this type of behavior, you really can't blame employees for taking advantage of it. Instead, you must fix the system—which we did. Now, however, certain interest groups, such as highly paid superintendents, are asking for carve-outs and exemptions.

Relying on retired public employees to come back to work is not a sustainable long-term solution. We need to create a pipeline of younger staff members to replace retiring workers. This bill creates disincentives for graduates to pursue certain education careers because it is protecting older retirees at the expense of recruitment of younger professionals.

Legislators should recognize that Maine's policies have discouraged young graduates from pursuing these careers in Maine. Let's stop enacting backwards, protectionist policies that reward double-dippers and instead make sure the money we spend in education actually benefits our students.

For these reasons, I return LD 1396 unsigned and vetoed. I strongly urge the Legislature to sustain it.

Sincerely,


Paul R. LePage
Governor



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