

TO: Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee

Support for H6238, Restoration of Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA)

I strongly support **H6238**, which would reinstate the annual cost-of-living increase based upon the yearly Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers (CPI-U) to the retirement allowance for state employees.

Those who retired before 2011 have been without a true cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for the past 14 years, and during that time the cost of living has risen 40%. The two small “adjustments” retirees received during those years came to a total of under 2%.

Based on the written promise of an annual COLA on our pensions, and as a condition of our employment, state employees paid 8.75% of each paycheck into the state pension fund during our years of employment (in my case, for 39 years), only to have that financial safety net pulled out from under us after we had already retired.

Elderly citizens in their 70's, 80's, and 90's are considered one of society's most vulnerable groups. The pension fund exists for the financial security of retirees, not the other way around. As a group, we retirees have already contributed more than our fair share of sacrifice toward pension fund “recovery”.

Restoring a true annual COLA to state retirees, and applying it to their full pension benefit, would give retirees some financial stability going forward.

We, the retirees, fulfilled our part of the employment contract. It's time for the State of Rhode Island to resume fulfilling its part of the contract.

I strongly urge you to vote to pass **H6238**, to return our annual COLA this year.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
Santa Privitera