

Representative Anastasia Williams, Chair
House Committee on Labor
Monday February 26, 2021
Support for H-5406 Binding Municipal Arbitration.

Chairwoman Williams and members of the House Committee on Labor,

My Name is Neal Belliveau and President of Local 280 N.A.G.E. of the Town of Portsmouth's DPW for the past 12 years. Thank you for the opportunity to speak again before the Committee via this Testimony during these Covid times. A few short years ago I stood before the Committee in House Chambers and told my story of how after 7 years of employment with the Town of Portsmouth's DPW in 2010 we were asked, negotiated and complied with their demands during Contract negotiations that we agreed to put all new hires of the Municipality into a 401a type plan and to grandfather all current employees to keep their Pension credits as is when we were hired. The Town agreed and now we fast forward 3 years to our next contract in 2013 and we were told that what we negotiated was not good enough and the Town needed all employees out of the Pension program. Well to our dismay we were all shocked that in our defense we explained that words meant something and this was wrong. In the end after long exhausting negotiations our pension credits were frozen after 10 years of service to the Town and forced into a 401a type plan for the remainder of our employment. Although I'm still employed by the Town and that plan is growing it's still not going to be the same as when I began employment with the Town and what I signed up for. I've been with the Town now for 17 years on March 8th and in 10 years when I'd like to retire my pension credits that were frozen will amount to only 26.79% for 25 years of employment. I know shocking and unbelievable right.

I believe that if we had binding arbitration at the time that we could have negotiated to keep our pension and being grandfathered in really meant something. I'm speaking to you on behalf of our Department of only 16 employees and we strongly recommend that you consider this bill passes so that we have a fighting chance in future negotiations.

Respectfully submitted,

Neal Belliveau
Local 280 N.A.G.E.
Portsmouth DPW