

Dear Chairman Guzzone and Members of the Committee,

I support Senate Bill 349.

This bill would stop the Department of Budget and Management from removing State retirees hired before 2011 from receiving the same prescription benefits we bargained for when we were hired. Effectively, when the law changed in 2011 to require all State retirees to go to Medicare Part D policies, those of us hired before the effective date of the change were not grandfathered in. This was and is simply unfair.

The financial impact of this change will be great on retirees. Prescriptions covered under the current State retiree benefits will need to increasingly be paid for out-of-pocket. This will mean hundreds of additional dollars per year for most of the 53,000 retirees, and even thousands of dollars in additional annual costs for many of us.

This issue has been the subject of a federal lawsuit; and the stay to the implementation of this change, which was in effect for several years, was recently lifted. So the issue is now back in the legislature's court.

As State employees, we were provided certain retirement packages as an incentive to work for the State of Maryland. It is a part of how the State attracts qualified potential employees to come and work for our citizens.

In short, we had a "deal" when we were hired and it is not right for the State to go back on the deal.

Thank you..

Edward Hargadon, Maryland Retiree (2018)

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