

4 Reasons to Vote “Yes” on Question 4

This November 7, Maine voters have an opportunity to protect Maine seniors and stabilize our state’s finances by voting “Yes” on Question 4.

Question 4 is a commonsense solution

Question 4 amends Maine’s constitution so that any losses in the state’s retirement system associated with unexpected economic downturns can be recouped over 20 years rather than the currently mandated 10 years.ⁱ Extending the time horizon for addressing losses associated with economic downturns brings it in line to industry standards and grants greater stability to Maine’s retirement system. That means that we won’t have to make false choices between maintaining benefits for seniors and providing funding for safe roads, quality schools, and access to affordable health care.

Question 4 will stabilize our state’s finances

In economic downturns, state resources are strained to maintain existing commitments to fund schools and communities while assuring that families who have fallen on hard times get the help they need. Requiring the state to pay back unexpected losses in its retirement system over 10 years puts even more strain on the state’s budget. Question 4 is a commonsense solution that will enable Maine’s retirement system to recover from unexpected losses responsibly without putting unnecessary strain on the state budget or compromising our ability to fund schools, help our neighbors, and support thriving communities.

Question 4 will protect Maine seniors

Question 4 is essential for protecting the economic security of more than 34,000 retirees who receive benefits through Maine’s retirement system. For many of these seniors, the benefits they receive through the state’s retirement system are their only income source because they paid into the state retirement system throughout their careers in lieu of social security. The consequences of not having enough time to recoup losses triggered by economic downturns in the state’s retirement system have proven costly to many retirees. After the 2007-09 recession, lawmakers froze cost of living adjustments for retirees and limited future adjustments. Passing Question 4 will reduce the need for such actions in the future and protect tens of thousands of Maine seniors.

Question 4 has support from across the political spectrum

Changing Maine’s constitution requires either a constitutional convention or a proposal from the state legislature to Maine voters to amend the constitution. Lawmakers worked with the Maine Public Employees Retirement System to develop Question 4. The state senate unanimously approved the measure and 122 out of 126 members of the state house of representatives voted to send the measure to voters. Now it is up to Maine voters to approve Question 4 to protect Maine seniors and stabilize our state’s finances.ⁱⁱ Lawmakers across the political spectrum support Question 4 and so should Maine voters. It is a commonsense solution for Maine.

ⁱ Statewide Ballot Question 4: “Do you favor amending the Constitution of Maine to reduce volatility in state pension funding requirements caused by the financial markets by increasing the length of time over which experience losses are amortized from 10 years to 20 years, in line with pension industry standards?”

ⁱⁱ For more on this issue, see the Portland Press Herald’s endorsement of Question 4 at

<http://www.pressherald.com/2017/10/09/our-view-vote-yes-on-statewide-question-4-to-support-pension-change/>