



The True Voice of Indiana's Retired Educators Since 1950

INDIANA RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

Website: www.retiredteachers.org

January 21, 2009 – The 116th General Assembly – First Session

The Indiana General Assembly reconvened January 7, 2009 for its “long” budget-making session which must adjourn no later than April 29, 2009. The Indiana State Senate still has a Republican majority of 33 Republicans and 17 Democrats. The House of Representatives increased the Democrat majority by one seat in the 2008 elections, bringing their majority to 52 Democrats and 48 Republicans. Top legislative leadership remains unchanged; President Pro Tempore David Long (R-Fort Wayne) again leads the Senate and Speaker B. Patrick Bauer, Democrat from South Bend, remains the Speaker of the House. Please refer to the 2009 Indiana Legislative Directory which was inserted in the Winter 2009 Bulletin Board for contact information.

The legislative luncheons hosting members of the House of Representatives will be held on February 5, 2009 (Districts 1-24, 26-50) and February 10, 2009 (Districts 25, 51-100). The luncheon for all 50 State Senators will be held on March 24, 2009. Invitations have been sent to all legislators, all local IRTA presidents and the IRTA Legislative Committee. RSVPs from legislators are coming in. All three luncheons will be held at 150 West Market Street, Indianapolis, in the second floor conference room, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Please let us know one week in advance if you plan to attend, and invite your legislators!

Did you know that you can watch the Indiana General Assembly and certain Committee hearings on your computer, live as the sessions progress? Go to the www.in.gov website, click the **GENERAL ASSEMBLY** tab near the top left side of the page, then click the **WATCH THE SESSION** tab under the “What’s New” section on the top right. You can choose whether to watch the Senate or the House of Representatives. You’ll also find archives of past sessions of the Legislature.

Here are the major bills which we support, as well as legislation of interest to retired teachers:

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COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT (COLA)

Representative Dennis Avery (D-Evansville) introduced House Bill 1022 which would provide a cost of living adjustment (COLA) for Indiana's retired educators. Rep. Avery authored the bill at the request of IRTA. Representative David L. Niezgodski (D-South Bend), Chairman of the House Labor Committee and the Pension Management Oversight Commission, is the coauthor. Under HB 1022, a 2% increase would be payable to those who retired before July 2, 2001, and a 1% increase would be provided to those who retired after July 1, 2001, and before July 2, 2007. These increases would be payable after December 31, 2009.

MINIMUM PENSION BENEFIT

It is an unfortunate hardship for some retired teachers that inflation has eroded much of their purchasing power due to their earlier retirement when salaries were low. Senate Bill 55, authored by Senator Vaneta Becker (R-Evansville), provides that the pension portion of the monthly benefit payable to a member of the Indiana state teachers retirement fund (TRF) who retired before January 1, 1979, and has at least 20 years of creditable service may not be less than \$500.

MILITARY SERVICE CREDIT

Representative Clyde Kersey (D-Terre Haute) has authored House Bill 1056 to provide military service credit for TRF members which would grant, under certain conditions, up to six years of service credit in TRF for a member's past active duty military service.

MERGING OF TRF AND PERF BOARDS

Senate Bill 535, regarding PERF/TRF administrative matters, has been introduced by Senator Dennis Kruse (R-Auburn). SB 535 is pending in the Senate Pensions and Labor Committee, of which Senator Kruse is chairman. Among other provisions, SB 535 would allow a vested member of TRF who terminates covered employment to elect to withdraw the entire amount in the member's annuity savings account (ASA) before the member is eligible to do so at retirement and receive a pension at retirement. The next hearing on this bill will be on February 4, 2009.

Andrew P. Thomas
IRTA Executive Director

Correct forms of address for members of the General Assembly are:

The Hon. John Smith	The Hon. John Smith or	
Senator John Smith	Representative John Smith	
The State Senate	OR	Indiana House of Representatives
200 W. Washington St.		200 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2785		Indianapolis, IN 46204-2786

Dear Senator Smith: Dear Representative Smith:

Correct form of address for the Governor is:

Governor Mitch Daniels
200 W. Washington Street, #206
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2797

Dear Governor Daniels:

Telephone Number: (317)232-4567

E-mail address: mdaniels@gov.in.gov

TOLL FREE NUMBERS-Use to call your legislators:

Senate:	House:
1-800-382-9467	1-800-382-9842
Indianapolis: 317-232-9400	Indianapolis: 317-232-9600

How to E-Mail your Legislator:

Senator's District number _____ **S_@IN.gov**

Representative's District number _____ **H_@IN.gov**

Visit the Indiana General Assembly web site at:

www.in.gov/legislative