



The True Voice of Indiana's Retired Educators Since 1950

INDIANA RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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February 12, 2009 – The 116th General Assembly – First Session

Legislative Luncheons. IRTA has held two legislative luncheons on February 5 and February 10. At our February 5 luncheon, Senate Appropriations Chairman Senator Luke Kenley made remarks and we presented to him a biography of Dr. Ethel Percy Andrus, the founder of the National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA) and AARP. Many of the House members were not able to attend the February 5 luncheon because the House was in session through the lunch hour, so the assembled IRTA leaders decided that if Representatives couldn't come to us, we'd go to them! These dedicated IRTA members personally delivered over 100 hand-written letters to their Representatives. This highly visible show of strength and resolve is helping advance the COLA bill and the IRTA agenda, as well as keeping IRTA and retired teachers in the minds of legislators. On February 10, over 55 IRTA members and 22 State Representatives had a very successful luncheon. Another biography of Dr. Ethel Percy Andrus was presented to State Rep. Dennis Avery for authoring the 2009 COLA legislation. The third and final legislative luncheon for all 50 State Senators is scheduled for March 24, 2009. The luncheons are 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!

Praise to Pensions and Labor Committee Chairman Dennis Kruse. A potential crisis was brewing regarding the **dues deduction** program for IRTA members. As you know, since 1980 over half of the members of IRTA have utilized the option to pay annual IRTA dues via automatic deduction from your September pension check. Under current law, an organization is required to have 20% of the **retired** membership of the retirement fund in order to qualify for dues deduction. Two proposed amendments to SB 535 would have added **active** teachers to the 20% threshold, which means that the active teachers' union would qualify for dues deduction, despite the obvious fact that dues deduction is for **retired** teachers. This would have put IRTA at a disadvantage in membership recruitment and retention. On Wednesday, February 11, Chairman Dennis Kruse **did not allow the amendments to pass** since there were not enough votes in the Pensions and Labor Committee. This was good for the Indiana Retired Teachers Association! So far the law remains the same, but the active teachers union has indicated that it may try to change the law in another piece of legislation. Your IRTA legislative leadership is working hard to prevent this from happening, and we need your help. Please contact your state representatives and senators and let them know that you are **opposed** to any changes in the current law regarding dues deduction for retired teachers.

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.

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