



## **TRS retirees need a COLA and active and retired educators need more-affordable health care; with a \$32.7 billion surplus, the Legislature can afford both**

### **Cost-of-living adjustment for retired educators**

In both 2019 and 2021, the Legislature gave retired educators an extra, or 13th, pension check, but that wasn't enough for retirees who are struggling on inadequate pensions. This year, they need a long-overdue cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). The average TRS pension in fiscal 2022 was \$2,174 a month, hardly enough to live on for many pensioners, particularly since most retired Texas educators don't get Social Security. TRS retirees haven't had a COLA in 19 years. Educators who retired since 2004 have never had one. It is past time for lawmakers to provide one, and with a \$32.7 billion surplus, they can afford it. Pensioners can't afford to wait any longer.

The Legislature also must honor its commitment to a long-term and cost-effective plan to keep the TRS Pension Fund actuarially sound by continuing to honor the phased-in contribution schedule already in state law.

TSTA will continue opposing any effort to replace the existing defined-benefit plan with a riskier 401(k)-style defined-contribution plan.

### **Active educators and retirees need more-affordable health care**

For two decades, the state also has neglected to increase its \$75 monthly contribution to TRS Active Care premiums for school employees, while health care costs have soared, cutting deeply into educator paychecks. TSTA is calling on the Legislature to increase that state contribution from \$75 to \$225 per month and require school districts to maintain a matching local contribution of at least \$225 per month. Many districts already contribute at least \$225, and the combined \$450 would cover a significantly higher portion of the cost of employees' health insurance.

The Legislature also must address the funding structure of TRS Care without reducing benefits for retirees or requiring either retirees or active teachers to shoulder an unfair portion of the funding burden.

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