



Mississippi Retired Public Employees' Association

P. O. Box 5580 | Brandon, MS 39047-5580 | 601.919.0670 | mrpea@bellsouth.net | mrpea.org

November 11, 2016

The Honorable _____

P. O. Box 1018

Jackson, MS 39215-1018

Dear Senator _____:

The Mississippi Retired Public Employees' Association (MRPEA) is committed to protecting the current retirement system. The Public Employees' Retirement System of Mississippi (PERS) was established in 1952 to provide the state's public workforce with basic retirement coverage. Payments to PERS retirees are a form of deferred compensation that have helped recruit and retain a quality public workforce over the years in Mississippi.

PERS members include not only state employees but also employees of Mississippi public schools, universities, community/junior colleges, counties, cities and other political subdivisions. All Mississippians regardless of whether they work in the public or private sector benefit in some way from the services PERS members provide. PERS member are an active and vital part of the communities in which they reside, pay taxes, vote, and raise their families.

More than 100,000 Mississippians are currently receiving retirement payments from PERS. Membership of PERS totals nearly 400,000 which includes those receiving payments, current active employees, and former public employees who have a retirement account maintained by PERS. Considering the spouses and adult family members of PERS members, that figure easily increases too more than 800,000 adult citizens who understand the critical importance of maintaining the support PERS provides. Many of these people are your constituents. The average pension is only about \$22,000 per year and does not include paid healthcare benefits. That modest amount when combined with Social Security payments enables PERS retirees to contribute to the state economy and avoid living in poverty with its inherent public assistance costs.

As to funding for PERS, 73 percent comes from mandatory employee contributions and investment income. The balance comes from participating employers. State employer contributions for 2015 accounted for less than 5 percent of state expenses, a figure that has remained relatively stable for decades. PERS paid more than \$2 billion to retirees in 2016 with 93 percent of that amount staying in state. According to a 2016 study by the National Institute on Retirement Security, retiree expenditures stemming from state and local pensions supported nearly 20,000 jobs in Mississippi in 2014. That same study found that every dollar invested by Mississippi taxpayers in PERS generated \$4.63 in economic output in the state during 2014.

In previous years, many of you signed a joint letter assuring PERS members that “you would not support any suggestions, idea, thought or plan to eliminate the annual cost of living check or in any way to change, alter, amend, in whole or part, the arrangement current employees with PERS.” We ask that you affirm your commitment to PERS by signing and returning the statement below in the enclosed envelope no later than November 30, 2016. Individual responses to the survey will be provided to our membership for their review and consideration as well as others interested in the well-being of PERS and its members.

We appreciate your service and look forward to partnering with you to support PERS.

Sincerely,

Becky Cade
MRPEA President

Ann Coleman Thames
MRPEA President-Elect

Edwin C. LeGrand, III, Chairman
MRPEA Legislative Committee

MRPEA SURVEY OF LEGISLATORS AND STATEWIDE ELECTED OFFICIALS

I WILL NOT SUPPORT ANY CHANGES TO STATE LAWS GOVERNING PERS THAT NEGATIVELY IMPACT CURRENT RETIREES AND CURRENT EMPLOYEES WHO ARE MEMBERS OF PERS INCLUDING ANY REDUCTION IN PAYMENTS AND COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENTS TO THESE INDIVIDUALS.

SIGNATURE

PRINTED NAME/TITLE

DATE

MAIL TO:

Mississippi Retired Public Employees' Association
P. O. Box 5580
Brandon, MS 39047-5580

Legislator Sign-ons as of December 22, 2016

Representatives

Bailey, Willie
Clarke, Alyce
Dortch, Jarvis
Eubanks, Dan
Evans, Michael
Evans, Robert
Holland, Steve
Hopkins, Steve
Horne, Steve
Hudson, Abe
Hughes, Jay
Mickens, Carl
Scott, Omeria
Sykes, Kathy
Sullivan, Preston
Tullos, Mark

Senators

Blount, David
Browning, Nickey
Butler, Albert
Hudson, Billy
Jolly, Russell
McMahan, Chad
Norwood, Sollie
Seymour, Joseph
Younger, Chuck