

INTHISISSUE:

PRESIDENT LETTER
2022 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE
WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

MRPEA Membership Form

Register or renew online at www.mrpea.org
or return form below with payment

_____ \$20 Annual Rate (August 1 – July 31) _____ \$250 Life Rate

_____ I want to support MRPEA with the enclosed donation

Check One: ___ Miss ___ Ms. ___ Mrs. ___ Mr. ___ Dr. ___ Other: _____

Name _____ County _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Email _____ Date of Birth _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Mail this form with a check payable to:
MRPEA, P.O. Box 5580, Brandon, MS 39047-5580

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See page 2 for District Directors

Welcome new MRPEA Members



I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of you for your membership and to welcome all of our new members to the Mississippi Retired Public Employee Association. MRPEA needs every member we can get to strengthen our voice as there is power in numbers. I am asking each of you to continue to reach out to people you know who are members of the Mississippi Public Employee Retirement System and invite them to become members of MRPEA. It may be someone you go to church with, work with, or a family member. The reason most people are not current members is that they are probably unaware that our organization exists.

There is much work to be done to ensure that our organization is moving forward and growing. If you have a desire to play a role above and beyond membership in making that happen, feel free to reach out to our Executive Director, Emily Pote, and let her know. The Legislature is nearing the end of this year's Regular Session. I know many of you contacted your local Senator or Representative and expressed your desire to continue the current structure of our benefits. Personal contact with these public servants is very important and key to the success of our mission to protect the financial security and benefits of PERS for current and future retirees.

As the pandemic seems to have quieted somewhat, it is my hope that we are able to hold an annual conference this year. We are currently working on plans to do this in the event it is possible. We will attempt to create an atmosphere that is safe as we all need to remain cautious. If a conference is able to take place, I am hopeful that many of you will be able to attend so we can network together and learn from one another.

The last two years have been very different and trying for all of us. Many of our friends and loved ones have tested positive and some have passed away. Our prayers are with everyone going forward and wish all of you the best.

Steven Allen, MRPEA President

**MRPEA
DISTRICT DIRECTORS**

DISTRICT 1

Forrest, George, Greene,
Hancock, Harrison,
Jackson, Lamar, Pearl
River, Perry, Stone
Wynona Winfield
(601) 955-4525
wwlsubeach@yahoo.com

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Adams, Amite, Claiborne,
Copiah, Franklin,
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VACANT

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Lauderdale, Leake,
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Smith, Wayne
James Cushman
(601) 739-3560
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DISTRICT 4

Hinds, Madison, Rankin
Joe Johnson
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joj1946@gmail.com

DISTRICT 5

Attala, Calhoun,
Chickasaw, Choctaw,
Clay, Lowndes, Monroe,
Montgomery, Noxubee,
Oktibbeha, Webster,
Winston
Marty Wiseman
(662) 312-6166
wmw3@msstate.edu

DISTRICT 6

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Sharkey, Sunflower,
Warren, Washington,
Yazoo
VACANT

2022 Legislative Update

House Bill (HB) 531 would **increase the sales tax** that all Mississippians pay on most items by **20%** raising the rate from 7% to 8.5%. The House plan would eliminate state income taxes for most taxpayers in 2023 and phase it out totally in future years. The state income tax accounts for 1/3 of general fund revenue at present.

If you are at least 59 years old, half **Mississippi does not impose income tax on your retirement income**. This includes distributions from 401ks, IRAs, pensions, deferred compensation plans, and Social Security and applies to all **Mississippi retirees** (in both the private and public sectors). Because your retirement income is already exempt from state income tax, **retirees living on a fixed income from these sources will receive no benefit from the elimination of the state income tax while paying 20% more sales tax** on most items under HB 531.

The Senate has also filed a tax cut bill: SB 3164. Overall the Senate plan has a number of elements that could benefit PERS members and other retirees but does include a phase-out of the 4% state income tax bracket and up to a 5% one-time tax rebate in 2022 **only** for those who paid income taxes. **Further erosion of the state income tax revenues is not in the best interest of PERS members**. Tax rebates which can be implemented periodically based on available revenues represent a more prudent approach to managing the state's finances. However, these rebates should be made to **all** Mississippians who filed a tax return, not just those who paid income tax. This would benefit all retirees including PERS members who pay substantial amounts in sales, local and other taxes each year.

Recommended Action

Oppose HB 531. Request amendment of SB 3164 by eliminating the proposed phase-out of the 4% income tax bracket and making the tax rebate in 2022 available to **all** Mississippians filing a tax return, not just those who paid income tax. Contact Speaker of the House, Phillip Gunn, Ways and Means Chairman, Trey Lamar, Lieutenant Governor, Delbert Hosemann, Senate Finance Chairman, Josh Harkins,

and your local Representative and Senator at the Capitol Switchboard (601) 359-2220.



What the State Economist's Office says

The State Economist's Office has studied the House tax cut plan and determined that by 2032 it would result in a loss of population and a reduction in employment and personal income in Mississippi. By 2035 there would be a reduction in state gross domestic product. These findings have negative implications for current and future PERS retirees and for the state as a whole.

What state business leaders say

"The Mississippi tax environment was not high profile nor even discussed significantly as a priority," said a report released by the Mississippi Economic Council at the state Capitol on Wednesday, based on dozens of meetings and hundreds of surveys of business leaders across the state last year."

"A businessman raised the topic (at one meeting) and dismissed it as a bad idea (a distraction issue, but not really a hindrance to most businesses)."

State business leaders consider the lack of skilled workers, Mississippi's image, and problems from the pandemic far more pressing issues.

Summary of House & Senate Bills

House Bill 531 would:

Eliminate state income taxes for most taxpayers in 2023 and phase it out totally within about a decade

Increase the sales tax on most retail items from 7% to 8.5%, an increase of 20%.

Cut the grocery tax eventually from 7% to 4%

Cut car tags in half, by using state tax dollars to subsidize local government car tag fees.



Senate Bill 3164 would:

Phase-out the 4% state income tax bracket over four years. This would mean people would pay no state income tax on their first \$26,600 of income, a savings of about \$50 a year.

Reduce the state grocery tax from 7% to 5%, starting in July.

Provide up to a 5%, one-time income tax rebate in 2022 for those who paid taxes. The rebates would range from \$100 to \$1,000.

Eliminate the state fee on car tags going into the general fund, which would be about \$5 off the cost of a new tag, \$3.75 for renewals.



DISTRICT 7

Alcorn, Benton,
Itawamba, Lee, Pontotoc,
Prentiss, Tippah,
Tishomingo, Union
VACANT

DISTRICT 8

Coahoma, DeSoto,
Lafayette, Marshall,
Panola, Quitman,
Tallahatchie, Tate,
Tunica, Yalobusha
VACANT

CONTACT MRPEA

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New Members

*We are working to grow MRPEA so that
we can better serve YOU, our member!*

Welcome new members! Remember, there is strength in numbers. The power of affiliation gives each member and the group as a whole a recognized voice of leadership to protect and strengthen PERS in the legislature and statewide.

Benny Butts
Beverly Terrell
Mike Roberts
Veronica C Vaughn
Andrew O. Day
Gaye M May

Garrett DeYoung
Judy Savage
Suzanne Shorter
Linda Foshee
David C Lowery
Sam F Swindoll