

ERS Board of Trustees action today, 4/15/2021:

The ERS board did not grant a COLA today, 4/15/2021. It did approve 2 supplemental non-compounding payments, each 3% of benefits up to \$30,000 -- effectively capping each payment at \$900. These payments will be restricted to retirees who are age 45 or over and retired at least 7 months. These restrictions do not apply to disabled retirees. No GSEPS retirees are eligible. The board did not mention when the supplements will be paid, but based on past experiences, expect them in early August and early February.

GSRA Response:

Retired state employees in the Georgia State Retirees Association are thankful for the ERS board's granting the two non-compounded payments for next fiscal year, especially since the inflation rate is rising faster this year as reported this week in the AJC. However, we cannot help but to be disappointed that the board chose once again to not grant a full cost of living adjustment (COLA) when conditions so favor it. The ERS pension fund's investment returns exceed 25% for the current fiscal year, state revenues have been unexpectedly strong, and Georgia will be receiving a previously unanticipated \$4.7 billion dollars in federal funds (an addition of more than 17% of expected state revenues). Including the rising cost of medical services as individuals age, retirees' cost of living has increased by upwards of 30% since we last received a COLA in 2009. More than half of almost 54,000 ERS retirees continue to receive less than \$22,000 annually. Many retirees are now struggling to keep pace with rising expenses.

Jim Sommerville, GSRA President