

Dear GSRA Members,

April 13, 2020

We hope this message finds you and your family healthy and free from the effects of the terrible pandemic. For those of you who are not that fortunate, please accept our greatest sympathies.

The Employees Retirement System Board of Trustees will meet at 10:00 on April 16 to consider benefit adjustments (COLAs) for its various plans including ours. The meeting will be conducted online due to the COVID 19 pandemic, so PLEASE STAY HOME. The board has invited President Jim Sommerville and your other GSRA legislative team members to view the meeting.

In this time of great uncertainty - and for many ERS retirees and other Georgians, great sorrow - it is still imperative for retirees to receive a COLA. This is your opportunity to again write the ERS Board about how much you want and need a COLA. Be respectful and remember that you are addressing the ERS board and not legislators. Describe the impacts on you and your family from not having received a COLA for the last eleven years while your living costs have risen. Include descriptions of new costs you are encountering such as for new hospitalizations, or new medications, or new personal assistants or assisted living accommodations, or, most sadly, unanticipated funerals. You can indicate that you are aware of the potential impact of the current crisis on other Georgia residents, the state budget and our pension fund, but you can also remind the board that all other state funded employees and retirees EXCEPT US have previously received COLAS and are presently slated to do so again in 2021. If you want to, thank the board for the one-time adjustments of the past four years.

Also -- and this is very important -- ask the board to instruct its actuary to include the cost of a COLA in determining the amount of state contribution the ERS fund will need next year to cover the cost of paying retirees' benefits. This is known as the ADEC (actuarially determined employer contribution). Increasing future ADECs will better provide funding for future COLAs.

In composing your message, USE YOUR OWN WORDS! We greatly undercut our effectiveness and credibility if we use the same words.

HERE IS THE EMAIL ADDRESS OF THE ERS BOARD OF TRUSTEES: boardoftrustees@ers.ga.gov

Thank you for your continued participation,

GSRA Board of Directors