



# Newsletter

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Vol. 18, Number 12

[www.MyGSRA.com](http://www.MyGSRA.com)

December 2024

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## From the Home Office

By Robert Riddle

Season's Greetings GSRA Members,

December finally ushered in cooler weather and, as always, the holiday season. Although GSRA is continually advocating for a meaningful COLA and reasonable health insurance coverage, among other promised benefits, as you will see in this newsletter, we continued to work hard to impress on our Legislators the needs of GSRA members and all state retirees. We encouraged them to ensure we have a reasonably sound retirement system in ERSGA and that Administration and Legislative leaders keep their commitment to appropriate additional funds to reduce ERSGA's unfunded liability.

In my last month as GSRA President, I am taking time to reflect on my work in 2024. First and foremost, I am gratified for all our dedicated members, Chapters, and volunteer Chapter leadership. Your advocacy this year with your local legislators on behalf of state retirees moved us toward our goal of getting all retirees the benefits they were promised and deserve.

Finally, as you get together with family and friends for Christmas and the New Year, I hope you are blessed with safe and joyful gatherings and enjoy good fellowship and food during this holiday season.

Again, I want to express my sincere gratitude for your membership, work, and support of GSRA and its mission this year!

Happy Holidays!

*Robert*



## GSRA Legislative Affairs Team Participates in the 34th Biennial Institute

By Allan Hill and Kip Mann

The 34<sup>th</sup> Biennial Institute for Georgia Legislators was held December 8<sup>th</sup>- 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at the University of Georgia (UGA) Center for Continuing Education in Athens, Georgia. Hosted by UGA's Carl Vinson Institute of Government, the Biennial Institute has been a tradition since 1958. The three-day event provides legislators valuable time for learning, networking, and exploring state issues before convening of the General Assembly. This year, 32 new legislators joined fellow lawmakers for updates on demographic trends in Georgia, behavioral health, artificial intelligence, workforce challenges, and powering economic development. Faculty members from the Carl Vinson Institute of Government moderated sessions with panelists, including government agency leaders, elected officials, and business executives from across the state. New and veteran legislators count on the Biennial Institute to provide information and training to help them make better-informed decisions for Georgia.

Your GSRA Legislative Affairs Team participated as an exhibitor in the Biennial Institute to effectuate our legislative goals and objectives.



Figure 1: GSRA's Legislative Affairs Team-Deupree Yancey, Robert Riddle, Senator Frank Ginn, Dan Coffee, and Chuck Clay

Early Sunday morning, Rhonda Floyd and Kip Mann set up the GSRA booth in preparation for the event. Then, over the three-day event, Robert Riddle, Dan Coffee, Deupree Yancey, and Charles C. (Chuck) Clay networked and interacted with numerous legislators and state officials to discuss GSRA legislative priorities, including COLAs.



**Figure 2: GSRA networked with legislators about COLAs. On the left are Dan Coffee, Rep. Chuck Efration, Robert Riddle, and Chuck Clay and on the right, Rep. Carmen Rice and Dan Coffee**

The event provided an excellent opportunity to get acquainted with new legislators and foster existing relationships with veteran legislators as part of our ongoing legislative efforts. Our team also visited with agency leaders and several members of the Governor's staff, stressing GSRA's role as an advocate for retirees and active state employees.

The three-day event wrapped up on Tuesday with a luncheon featuring the leadership from both houses and remarks by Governor Brian Kemp.



**Figure 3: Governor Kemp was the final speaker of the event.**

The Georgia General Assembly is scheduled to convene on Monday, January 13<sup>th</sup> for first day of the 2025 Regular Session of the 2025-2026 legislative term. This will be the first year of this new term.



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## Action Alerts and What We Can Do

As GSRA members, we can support the Legislative Affairs team by getting to know and contacting our local legislators to support efforts to pass legislation beneficial to GSRA membership and, when necessary, to oppose legislation with potential adverse impacts on our membership. You can find out who they are and their contact information by visiting the GSRA website at <https://gsra.memberclicks.net/contacting-legislators>. Personal visits and telephone calls are much more persuasive than messages and letters, although those do help. Over the coming weeks, watch for **Action Alerts** from GSRA as developments unfold in this legislative session.

## Local GSRA Chapter News

### NW Georgia Chapter

The NW Georgia Chapter had our last meeting of 2024 on October 24th. Our speaker was Ms. DeeDee Williams with the Georgia Center for the Hard of Hearing and Deaf. She presented a very informative program on various resources and equipment. She provided information on amplifiers, equipment for people listening to someone speaking too fast, and even an alarm clock/doorbell/bed shaker. Although these products are income-based, they are trying to get the limits raised. She advised they can, however, be bought online at Wal-Mart. We all enjoyed lunch together at the Yellowstone Steak & Buffet in Dalton.

### Columbus/West Georgia Chapter

The Columbus/West Georgia Chapter of GSRA held its quarterly chapter meeting on Tuesday, November 19, 2024, at Epworth United Methodist Church. Thirty members attended.



Figure 4: Thirty members attended the November meeting.

Sherrie Fisher and Tammy Huling of Oak Street Health Care, owned by CVS Health and endorsed by AARP, spoke with our members about their comprehensive health care for seniors. Oak Street functions as the patient's primary health care provider, treats chronic conditions and focuses on wellness and prevention. They answered many questions for our members and provided valuable handouts.



Figure 5: Sherrie Fisher and Tammy Huling of Oak Street Health Care provided information about their health care for seniors.

We also honored veterans, held our annual elections, and later served a lunch of sandwiches, chips, and dessert.

## CSRA-GSRA Chapter

The CSRA-GSRA chapter met on December 11 at the Villa Europa Restaurant in Augusta. We had a wonderful meal and enjoyed the camaraderie with our fellow retirees. Three lucky winners received a gift card.



Figure 6: CSRA-GSRA members enjoyed lunch and fellowship at the December meeting.

The next meeting will be held on January 21, 2025, at the Richmond County Health Department, 950 Laney-Walker Blvd, Augusta. The speaker will be announced at a later date. Please join our Facebook group (CSRA-GSRA) for further information. We hope everyone has a safe and happy holiday!

## **Tifton CSRA Chapter Organization Committee**

The Tifton GSRA chapter leadership committee met on December 13th in Tifton at the DOT District Office.

Agenda items included:

- GSRA Local Chapter Policies, Guidelines, and Processes
- Tips for Starting a Chapter
- GSRA Chapter By-Laws
- Chapter Officers
- Identifying/recruiting potential chapter members -Meeting schedule/location

Four individuals agreed to serve as chapter officers. For the next step, the committee scheduled a steering committee meeting at the Tifton Library on February 20th at 10 a.m.



**Figure 7: Tifton GSRA Organization Committee leadership is working hard to kick off the new chapter.**



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## Welcome New Members!

Name	County	Name	County
Julie Carter	Richmond	Pamula Tanner	Columbus
Tonya Mounkes	Chatham	Sheryl Rehberg	Lowndes
Sheewana Jackson	Hancock	Cynthia Grovenstein	Effingham
Merle McFadden	Richmond	William Newsome	Jefferson
Charles Johnson	Muscogee	Betty Long	Effingham
Anita Campbell	Dekalb	Elaine Wallace	Toombs
Marie McNair	Columbia	June Myrick	Meriwether

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Call **1-855-322-7060** to learn more about Anthem's health plans for GSRA members.

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Healthcare**

\*2022 UnitedHealthcare Customer Experience Survey scores for Group Medicare Advantage plan members. Plans are insured through UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company or one of its affiliated companies, a Medicare Advantage organization with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in the plan depends on the plan's contract renewal with Medicare.  
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# The Ballance Group







RETIRED MEMBERS



Georgia State Retirees Association has partnered with BMG Money's **LoansforRetirees** program to help you with unexpected expenses.

LoansforRetirees offers reliable, affordable on-line installment loans to help in times of need, regardless of your credit history.

-  Emergency loans starting at \$3,000.01\*
-  Payments made over 26 months
-  Monthly payments of \$170\*
-  Apply regardless of your credit score

Sign up now at

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"Georgia State Retirees Association" or  
"GSRA" as the name of your employer



Questions: [customer.service@bmgmoney.com](mailto:customer.service@bmgmoney.com) / 800-316-8507



\*Fixed sample interest rate: 34.73% per year with a one-time fee of \$40.00. For example, a \$3,000.01 loan repaid in 26 installments over 26 months, the APR will be 35.95% and the approximate monthly payment will be \$170.00 (assuming a loan execution date of 06/01/2023). Other terms and conditions apply, and your loan may vary depending upon your loan execution date, actual payroll deduction schedule, etc. Must be employed for at least 1 year with the employer to be eligible to apply. Not all applicants will qualify for a loan. Loan is based on an agreement between the borrower and BMG Money, Inc. The Georgia State Retirees Association is not responsible for any financial aspects of LoansforRetirees.

## LIVE LIFE, UNINTERRUPTED.

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GEORGIA STATE RETIREES ASSOCIATION