



## Georgia State Retirees Association

As we are sure you are aware, HB 173 has a provision that was initiated by GSRA to provide retiree input into the selection of ERS Board of Trustees members for the two board positions (out of seven total positions) for which appointments are made by the remaining ERS board members. The rationale for this, of course, is to assure that the interests of retirees are considered in decisions the ERS Board makes through proper representation on the Board. This is consistent with the manner by which constituent groups are represented on the TRS board.

GSRA has been vigorously advocating for this for several years and succeeded this year in having the bill passed overwhelmingly by the General Assembly. HB 173 also authorizes large state and local retirement systems OTHER THAN ERS and TRS to place up to 10% of their pension funds in alternative investments. HB 173 was amended to exclude ERS investments because of your overwhelming opposition in response to a GSRA survey question about increasing the percentage of the ERS pension fund which could be placed in alternative investments. Legislators in fact listened to you!!

HB 173 is now before the Governor for signature.

This is the perfect time for retirees to thank the Governor for his support for HB 173 as well as convey to him our thanks for the bill's author Rep. Tommy Benton, for House Retirement Committee Chair John Carson, for Rep. Matthew Gambill, and for Senator Chuck Hufstetler who carried the bill in the Senate before both the committee and the floor. You can mention how important HB 173 is to you in that it treats ERS similarly to TRS in its two provisions. Then thank the Governor for favorably considering signing the bill. You might also note that you will not forget his support for state retirees.

As always, it is critical that you phrase your message in YOUR OWN WORDS. Do NOT cut and paste any of the above. And PLEASE DO NOT dilute your message by commenting on other issues such as the ERS board granting two "non-compounding" 3% payments next year of a maximum \$900 each -- for which we are grateful -- and failing to grant a COLA, which we would request the Governor for his support next year. We can send messages like that AFTER the Governor signs HB 173.

There is no way for the general public to just email the Governor. You have to do so as follows:

- Access the web page, <https://georgia.gov/contact-georgiagov>,
- Scroll down to item "2. Get Help Online,"
- Hit the down arrow in the "Select" box immediately under "2. Get Help Online,"
- Write your message (REMEMBER TO USE YOUR OWN WORDS!),
- Enter your name in the boxes provided,
- Enter your address,
- Enter your contact information,
- Click on whether you are writing on behalf of an organization or group (it does not matter whether you choose yes or no), and
- Click on "Send."

Whew! That's a lot of work, but it will be worth it.

Sincerely,

Jim Sommerville, President  
Chuck Freedman, Legislative Liaison