

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Charlie Roberts

3/21/09

Friday was the 34th Legislative Day and once again the House has revised the 2010 Budget. The Appropriations Committee is warning that Georgia is not on schedule with economic recovery and presented revisions. Even Speaker Richardson came to the Well to stress financial concerns for our state. The new Budget passed the House and set the stage for hot debate in the Senate next week.

Wednesday was a full afternoon for Retirement Legislation. The Senate Retirement Committee met at 2PM and passed 4 House Bills to clear up changes that have been made in ERS or JRS. Representatives Tommy Benton, Debbie Buckner and Howard Maxwell worked very hard on this legislation and are to be commended. The remainder of the afternoon was with the House Retirement and Senate Bills that had been passed. Of concern to many of our ERS members was SB 122, which separates funding for state employees and educators (TRS members are NOT included in this bill). After much discussion SB 122 was given Committee Do Pass and forwarded to the House Rules Committee. The committee also held a "Hearing Only" on SB 176. This legislation would require the General Assembly that creates an unfunded mandate to finance the full cost in the year it becomes law, which would be detrimental to future benefits and long term programs. (Rep. Brooks Coleman was strongly opposed to the bill as were others on the committee. GREA, State Employees Assoc. GAE and PAGE supported them in opposition). No committee action was taken but I am confident it will return next year.

We have been blessed this session with well-informed Retirement Committees. House Chairman Howard Maxwell and Senate Chairman Bill Heath have been accessible and good listeners with solid advice. Listed below are the committee members and if any are in your Local Delegation I hope you will thank them for their leadership and support:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

Rich Golick
Tyrone Brooks
Tommy Benton
Debbie Buckner
Brooks Coleman
Burke Day

Craig Gordan
Lynmore James
Gene Maddox
John Meadows
Tom Weldon
" Coach Williams "

SENATE:

Jim Butterworth
Ronnie Chance
Jack Murphy
Freddie Sims

Cecil Staton
Doug Stoner
Horacena Tate

The TRS Board of Directors will meet on Wednesday and Dr. Sloan and some members of our Governing Board will be present. If my Capitol Schedule permits, I will join them.

Please continue to watch for " Piggyback Alerts " and the next UPDATE will be next week -end.