

“Together”

AFSCME TEXAS ★ RETIREES CHAPTER 12

A Retiree Chapter
of the American
Federation of State,
County and Municipal
Employees, AFL-CIO

Summer 2018

1812 Centre Creek Drive, Suite 130 • Austin, TX 78754 • 800-221-9181 • 512-477-9181 • www.afscmetexasretirees.org

Securing the Future of Our Pension: Notice of 2019 Biennial Convention and Call for Nominations to the Board

Our action-packed biennial convention will take place on March 1, 2019, in Austin, Texas, at the Hampton Inn and Suites University-Downtown.

Online registration begins September 1, 2018, at www.afscmetexasretirees.org. Registration by phone is also available by calling the office at 512-477-9181.

The registration fee is \$5. Your registration will cover breakfast and lunch for the one-day convention. Please contact the office if you would like a room reservation at the Hampton Inn.

The convention is just starting to take shape, but the election of officers and trustees is a certainty. Nominations for these positions will open on December 1, 2018. Please send your nominations to the office for referral to the Elections Committee.

Starting on September 1, 2018, details about the convention will be posted on our website and Facebook pages as they become available.

We are looking forward to seeing you in Austin on March 1, 2019.

President's Corner by Maura Powers

Greetings since last year's newsletter! Since then, we have been in between legislative sessions, so not much affecting our pension plan has been going on.

Last summer, I reported to you that the ERS Board of Trustees was considering reducing the assumed rate of return on investments a full percentage point from 8% to 7%.

This would have made it appear that ERS needed several billion



more dollars in order to pay retirees' pensions in the future. We knew from past experience that the legislature was unlikely to appropriate several billion dollars for the plan. And, our plan would be susceptible to even more bashing by those people who oppose it.

So, we asked our members to email the trustees that a reduction to 7% was not justified. Thanks to our membership's communication efforts, the trustees, in a highly unusual 4-2 vote, reduced the rate by only half a point to 7.5%, the highest rate the consulting actuaries would approve. While half a percentage point may not seem like much, there is now estimated to be \$2.1 billion more in the plan than had the rate gone all the way down to 7%.

This whole episode shows the importance of electing trustees who will take into consideration the views of state employees and retirees. The next trustee election will be in the spring 2019. Please be on the lookout for it.

Upcoming ERS Events

- Joint Meeting of the Board of Trustees and Investment Advisory Committee (Open Meeting)
8 a.m.-5 p.m.
Wednesday, August 29, 2018
200 E. 18th St., Austin, TX 78701
- Pension Review Board Meeting
October 4, 2018
(Time and location TBD)
<http://www.prb.state.tx.us/about/board/board-meetings/>



Chances Are You Will Need Long-Term Care

*By Elaina Fowler,
Executive Director*



Now that baby-boomers are leaving the workforce and entering retirement, the State of Texas is taking note. In a new program by the Texas Department of Health and Human Services Commission called "OwnYourFuture," the state is trying to prepare new retirees for their future by informing them of the costs of aging.

Many people assume that long-term care is covered by their disability, healthcare, or Medicare insurance, but that is incorrect. The Department's toolkit contains information about long-term care options. For more information, visit OwnYourFutureTexas.org.

In Texas, a home health care aide averages \$3,817 per month.

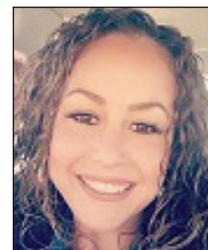
According to a study completed by Seniorhomes.com, an assisted living facility costs a minimum of \$3,500 per month. And, if you are a retired woman, you can expect

your costs to be significantly more due to a longer life expectancy. Be prepared and make plans for your long-term health needs by knowing your options."

Welcome, Jessica Acosta

AFSCME Texas Retirees is happy to announce our newest team member, Jessica Acosta. Jessica comes to us most recently from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission where she interviewed clients to determine their eligibility for benefits. Prior to HHSC Jessica worked as a billing support specialist. Her eye for detail and skills as a self-starter, multi-tasker and office computer skills all make her a welcomed asset to AFSCME Texas Retirees.

"It's exciting to be a member of the AFSCME Texas Retirees family.



This experience is new to me; working within the political realm. Executive Director, Elaina Fowler has become a great mentor to me and is always helpful and encouraging me to reach my full potential. It gives me great joy to be on the frontlines helping public service retirees secure their retirement and pensions. I am looking forward to a bright future with AFSCME Texas Retirees."