INSIDE LINE By Tim Lee

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By Tim Lee, Executive Director.

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Another Chance for HB 3542!

Good News on Budget Negotiations for TRS-Care Participants

The Texas House should take up SB 1581, the "school finance" bill, tonight. This bill is being prepped for several possible amendments. One amendment that will be offered to SB 1581 is a bill the Texas House previously approved with a vote of 136-1.

Representative Larry Gonzales (R-Round Rock) has an amendment that will add the language from HB 3542 to the school finance bill. As TRTA reported last week, HB 3542 was sent to the Senate but was never scheduled for a committee hearing. Now, Representative Gonzales is asking his fellow House members to support him one more time and add HB 3542 as an amendment to SB 1581. This legislative maneuver will keep the idea alive as time runs out to pass the bill this legislative session.

We need your help! Please email or call (1.888.674.3788) your Texas House member and ask them to "Vote YES on the Larry Gonzales Amendment Supporting TRS Retirees." (There is no pre-filed amendment packet to reference, and this is the only amendment being offered by Representative Gonzales).

TRTA members are very grateful for the overwhelming support we already have received from the Texas House on HB 3542. Now, with time running out, we have one more opportunity to keep this legislation advancing in the process.

Please email your legislator **TONIGHT**. TRTA will keep you updated on the progress of this amendment.

Click Here to Email your Texas House Member Supporting the Larry Gonzales Amendment

Budget Update

The House and Senate budget conferees met this morning to announce their strategy on the TRS budget. TRTA members have made a major difference on this vital issue. The conferees announced their support for the Senate plan, also known as the "Duncan Plan." As you recall, this plan:

- funds the TRS pension trust fund at 6.0 percent in the first year of the biennium and 6.4 percent in the second year of the biennium (this is an additional $100 million over the original budget proposal);
- funds the TRS-Care program at 1.0 percent in the first year of the biennium and 0.5 percent in the second year (this is an additional $135 million over the original budget proposal);
- **provides budget language that prohibits an increase in TRS-Care premiums for the coming biennium**; and
- sweeps any excess budget dollars available through the annual "settle-up" from/to TRS in the budget process back to TRS-Care.

The actions taken by the budget conferees are one more step towards achieving the goal of preventing drastic TRS-Care premium increases in the coming biennium. We are truly grateful to the conferees for agreeing with the Senate strategy to help TRS-Care participants. While this issue is not completely resolved yet, TRTA is working with legislators to preserve this current budget strategy. We will let you know when a decision is finalized.

Thank you for your continued support in these final days of legislative session. Your emails and phone calls are making a difference!