

# TRTA DISTRICT X

## LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER

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### Guest Article

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Tips from TR:

**51 days (From August 15) 44 what does that mean?** That means we have 51 days to make our voices known before the November election. Sounds like a lot of time, doesn't it? But where has the summer gone? **Our tasks in these next 51 days are these:**

- **Inform ourselves about the candidates that we will be voting on**
  - **Write, email, visit or phone their offices and let them know of your concerns about TRS-Care and the preservation of our defined benefit**
- **Talk to everyone you know to find out if they are registered to vote**
  - **If they are not, encourage and help them to become a registered voter:**
    - **Check the website [Am I a Registered Voter?](#)**
    - **Register at your county Voter Registrar's office (Tax-Assessor-Collector's office or County Clerk or Elections Administrator's office)**
    - **Register by mail by obtaining an application from Voter's Registration Office, libraries, government offices, or local high school counselor's offices.**
    - **Fill out a voter registration application online, print it and mail it to the voter registrar in your county of residence.**

These are just a few of the ways to become a registered voter if you or someone you know is not already registered.

**THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO GET EVERYONE YOU KNOW TO VOTE!**

PLAN A TRANSPORTATION TEAM FROM YOUR UNIT TO TAKE PERSONS TO THE POLLS WHO MAY NOT BE COMFORTABLE DRIVING , ARE UNABLE TO DRIVE , OR JUST NEED HELP GETTING THERE AND THE ENCOURAGEMENT. (Some may go just to get out and have social contact on that day.)

Coming

### Member Participation

**Local Unit members will be asked to write personal letters to their Legislators. These letters should "Tell Your Story." Relating how the changes to The TRS CARE Insurance Program will affect to you and your financial security.**

**These letters should be hand written. Unit Leg. Chairmen will collect the letters.**

## CRISIS CRISIS CRISIS

**Our Defined Benefit TRS Pension Plan is NOT actuarially sound for the first time in quite a few years. (Low state funding and a volatile market affected our investments) We are expecting the Defined Benefit vs Defined Contribution to be a concern in the next session.**

**Our TRS-Care Insurance Plan is in trouble, the worst situation in 31 years. In the last Legislative session. We were fortunate to receive funding for a shortfall, (768 Million.) NO FUNDS WERE ADDED TO INSURE THE STABILITY OF THE PROGRAM. The shortfall going into the upcoming session will be 1.5 Billion. If we are fortunate enough to receive these funds, IT DOES NOTHING to stabilize the program. This amount is needed to pay our bills, because of the huge difference between the funding and the cost of healthcare. The changes to the Plan that TRS announced will go in to effect on Sept. 1 will only get the plan through 2017. Experts tell us a raise in premiums is unavoidable, but that step has not been announced.**

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## VOTE VOTE VOTE

In the November General election, please vote for the person who will be sympathetic and supportive of our issues. We need to elect individuals who have influence with other legislators who will work to find solutions for our problems.

1. Contact your Legislators and Candidates for Office.
2. Determine their stance and suggestions for our issues.
3. Research their histories with our issues,
4. Elect CHAMPIONS for Educational Retirees.
5. VOTE-----DON'T BE LEFT OUT OF THE PROCESS

District X                    6100 Members  
TRTA                            81000 Members  
Texas Educ. Retirees 360,000 Members  
*If we all voted, we could control the Nov. Election.*

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## THE DOWN BALLOT

To vote these CHAMPIONS we must remember to pay attention to the DOWN BALLOT. The top of the ballot is for the national races, such as the Presidential race. Page 2 of 3 As you read down the ballot you will come to the races for the Texas Senate and House of Representatives , the races that might impact who will be in office to be the CHAMPION for TRS Retirees. There exists a concern that people will vote a straight ticket and forget about the lower listed Contests.

Voters choose a straight ticket vote for several reasons:

- They feel a straight ticket vote will insure more candidates in their own party will gain the offices.
- It is easy and quick.
- Have no interest, nor knowledge of any race except for the Presidency.
- Do not know they can vote for candidates from both parties.
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The races that will affect Educational Retirees on the State Level will be in the lower ballot. There are good people running for the Texas Legislature from both parties. There are supporters of Retiree issues in both parties. Unfortunately there are inexperienced and unprepared candidates running for office in each party.

We need to vote for the most qualified person for the office, who would be inclined to help and support Retirees. We run the risk of having unqualified people waltzing into office because people vote only a straight ticket.

**PLEASE BE AN INFORMED AND RESPONSIBLE VOTER!**

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## LOCAL UNIT CONTACT TEAMS ARE BEING FORMED

Tim Lee, TRTA Executive Director, and the Austin Legislative Team have requested the formation of a contact team for each Legislator and Candidate. These teams should be formed by September 30, 2016, and operational immediately after that date.

Contact Teams (2-4 people) visit the Legislator first at the District Office; follow through with emails, and phone calls. The team is building a relationship with the Legislator. They share Retiree Issues, explain TRTA Priorities, and determine the Legislators stance on those subjects. A handout to use during those visits will be attached to this email.

If a Legislator has an opponent in the November Election, the same Contact Team will take both of the individuals. After the election, the team will continue with the winner. Local Legislative Chairmen will soon have specific instructions concerning the formation of the Contact Teams, and the process of reporting.

**PLEASE BE A PART OF THIS LEGISLATIVE EFFORT.**

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