These letters are purely suggested language for you to use in your communication to your legislators. You do not need to copy the letters word-for-word; please feel free to pick and choose the language you want to use when communicating to legislators.

Dear __________:

My name is ___________________________ and I am a retired educator from __________________. [Add something personal about your educational experiences.] I am a current, tax-paying resident of Louisiana and continue to support the local and state economy with my retirement benefit. I am also a member of the Louisiana Retired Teachers Association.

I am writing to ask that you SUPPORT Senate Bill 18 by Senator Ed Price, which outlines a new model for the employer to pay for supplemental benefits in a more direct methodology. Supplemental benefits in Louisiana are referred to as cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) or permanent benefit increases (PBIs).

The cost of living, including groceries, commodities and insurance costs, continues to remain high. For most Louisiana retired teachers, their pension is their ONLY source of retirement income. Please support a bill that will address this issue for current and future retired teachers.

In 2020, both the House and Senate chambers passed resolutions requesting the state retirement systems to review new methods to provide “meaningful benefit increases on a regularly scheduled basis, designed to preserve the purchasing power of the recipients.” SB 18 is in response to the legislature’s requests.

Retirement reforms are working in Louisiana and this new beneficial legislation assures pension reforms will be preserved. Moreover, it does not create additional debt to the retirement system.

Additionally, the projected outcome of this legislation includes increasing the frequency of COLAs/PBIs, future costs become better known and transparent as set by the legislature, includes employer safeguards controlling for costs, and provides that the legislature retain full control over granting COLAs/PBIs.

By supporting this legislation, you are preserving the buying power of retired educators and providing for a greater economic impact on the business and industry in Louisiana. Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

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Louisiana's retired teachers have received only two COLAs (2016 and 2022) equaling about 3.5% of inflation. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) for this time period was 17.92%. Essentially, $1 in 2016 was worth about $1.24 in 2022.

With SB 18, COLA/PBI frequency becomes much more predictable and their future costs becomes much more transparent. In addition to establishing employer safeguards to control for costs, SB 18 retains both the legislature's full control over granting COLAs/PBIs and beneficial pension reforms.

SB 18 simply proposes a different yet reliable method to funding COLAs. COLAs will not be automatic and will still require legislative approval.

This new approach will not create new debts to the retirement system, because there will be employer safeguards put into place to control for costs (such as capping the employer rate at 2.5% annually). The essential pension reforms that have continued to reduce the retirement debt and increasing its funding level annually will also remain in place.

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Louisiana's retired teachers have received only two COLAs (2016 and 2022) equaling about 3.5% of inflation. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) for this time period was 17.92%. Essentially, $1 in 2016 was worth about $1.24 in 2022. Research has shown the great economic impact pension benefits have on local and state economies. Please support a bill that will address this issue and protect the purchasing the power of retirees.

SB 18 simply proposes a different yet reliable method for employers to fund COLAs. COLAs will not be automatic and will still require legislative approval.

This new approach will not create new debts to the retirement system, because there will be employer safeguards put into place to control for costs (such as capping the employer rate at 2.5% annually). The essential pension reforms that have continued to reduce the retirement debt and increasing its funding level annually will also remain in place.

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