



Winter 2025

# LOUISIANA RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

## *Why Join? To Stay Informed!*



I think everyone would agree that we live in a politically charged and often polarized political environment that makes it almost impossible to make informed decisions until we vet every aspect of an issue before casting a vote on any potential law or constitutional amendment.

The Louisiana Retired Teachers Association is the only organization in the state that spends 100% of its time examining potential laws and amendments, interpreting policy, and examining guidance that potentially affects retired teachers. *(Article continues on page 2)*

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR *Executive Director*



Joining LRTA now is essential as we rapidly approach amendments to the state constitution that affect both our retirement and tax ramifications for the citizens of our state.

By joining LRTA you will support our work of examining hundreds of pages of changes to our state constitution and providing you with recommendations before entering the voting booth in March 2025.

The state held a special session from November 5, 2024, through November 25, 2024, to re-examine the Louisiana tax code. This broad examination of current taxation provisions could eliminate protections in the state constitution regarding sales and property taxes affecting the poor and middle-class citizens of our state.

Here's what we know:

“Item 2 of the call stated: To legislate relative to the payment of permanent teacher and school personnel pay raises by paying down the unfunded accrued liability of the Teachers’ Retirement System of Louisiana (TRSL) and by appropriation, and relative to authority of TRSL regarding calculation of system liabilities and required funding, and amortization.”

Essentially, this provision would help pay down a major portion of the

teacher retirement debt and would substantially increase our retirement funding level. Further, the cost savings from this provision would lower the employer contribution rate and provide for permanent teacher pay raises.

Based on what we knew at the writing of this article the LRTA Board adopted the following motion. “To support constitutional change that pays down the UAL significantly and funds permanent teacher pay raises.”

Therefore, from an organizational perspective LRTA encourages our members to vote favorably for the constitutional change in March of 2025.

However, there are various and numerous recommended changes to the state tax code that could increase the tax liability for individual citizens of our state, particularly the poor and middle class.

The following two items of the call to bare a closer examination when determining how to vote on a constitutional change.

Item 8: “To legislate state sales and use tax and local sales and use tax, including rates, exemptions, deductions, reductions, exclusions, credits, rebates, and alternative reporting methods.”

Essentially, this item could remove many sales tax exemptions in the constitution resulting in citizens paying sales tax on previously exempted items like lawn services, hair styling, pet grooming, etc.

At the writing of this article the legislature was considering the removal of 40 exemptions on sales tax services for the voters to consider on the constitutional amendment this spring.

Item 10: “To legislate with regard to ad valorem property taxation, millages, assessments, rates, exemptions, and with regard to funding for incentives in lieu of taxation.”

Without a close examination of what exemptions on property taxes (ad valorem) are proposed, there could be an increase in property tax liability with these changes, or at the very least, the ability of the state legislature to make the changes without constitutional protections.

Therefore, we encourage LRTA members to examine these provisions closely before entering the voting booth in March.

I encourage all retirees to join LRTA today so that we can provide you with updates on these and other proposed changes before voting begins this spring. LRTA will provide you with updates prior to voting through social media, email blasts, and on our website at LRTA.net.

By joining LRTA, you will support our efforts to provide regular updates on how these potential changes could affect retirees as a whole and you as an individual before entering the voting booth.

If you have never joined LRTA or have a lapsed membership, it's never been more important to join so that you can participate in advocacy to protect both your retirement and tax exemptions currently protected in our state constitution.

Visit LRTA.net and click on the *JOIN NOW* button in the upper right corner of the website's home screen to become a member.

*Rodney R. Watson*

Rodney R. Watson  
LRTA Executive Director

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR *LRTA President*



We have been emphasizing membership because our strength is in our numbers. The more numbers we have, the stronger our voice and the more legislators will listen.

Retired educators are making a difference. Retirement means more time to spend with family, the opportunity to take a long-desired vacation, or learn a new hobby. The options are great, but retired educators have also chosen to jump back into action to protect public schools' students, active educators, retired educators, and the teaching profession. As a retiree, you can do both.

Retired teachers often get involved in retiree associations to stay connected with their colleagues. LRTA offers opportunities for retired educators to engage in events specifically designed for us, like our annual fall state conference, providing opportunities to network, socialize, and be informed about critical issues in education, politics, and our own Teachers' Retirement System of Louisiana (TRSL). Through LRTA you can make new connections, get involved in volunteer opportunities, mentor, work with non-profits, and have connections for returning to work should you choose to do so.

Advocacy is a growing movement among LRTA. It is a critical movement. Ten years ago, you could shoot a cannon through the House Retirement Committee room. Presently, we now fill these committee rooms with retirees who advocate for better retirement benefits and protect what we currently have. People show up in Baton Rouge and lobby state elected officials to protect our state benefits as well as health benefits, both of which are always at risk.

Little did many know that a federal law would reduce or eliminate the Social

Security benefit for retired public employees receiving government pensions, including the spouse's survivor benefits. WEP/GPO changes a person's lifestyle, because they do not have the income they were expecting or were entitled to receive. LRTA got busy, and thanks to the power of our numbers, HR 82, The Social Security Fairness Act, garnered enough co-sponsors to finally be heard in Congress. Even if HR 82 does not complete the legislative process (we will know by the printing of this publication), it will certainly pave the path to a new bill next year.

LRTA represents the interests of educators and school personnel, both active and retired. We keep abreast of all pending legislation. This helps our active working members, because when they are in the classrooms retirees are out testifying.

LRTA monitors and works with the Teachers' Retirement System of Louisiana. TRSL presently has two members representing retirees on their Board of Trustees. I am proud to be a part of that, serving alongside Dr. James Taylor as one of those two trustees protecting your interests.

Remember, the power is in our numbers. Whether you are a current retiree, a future retiree, or someone interested in the issues, join LRTA today at [LRTA.net](http://LRTA.net) and click on *JOIN NOW*.

*Clyde F. Hamner*

Clyde F. Hamner  
LRTA State President

## Join or Renew

It is membership renewal time! LRTA is the **ONLY** membership organization in Louisiana devoted solely to advocating for the needs of the retired education community. We need your support to remain strong and to maintain a unified voice representing all retirees from Louisiana's educator community. Please consider renewing your dues or joining today!

This mailing from LRTA includes several items. Please check the chart below to ensure that you have received all necessary materials. All materials may be returned to LRTA in the enclosed postage paid envelope (if applicable). Ballots must be received by the LRTA Office no later than February 14, 2025.

Membership Class	Newsletter	Return Envelope	Membership Form	LRTA Ballot	Candidate Information
Lifetime Member	X	X		X	X
Continuing Member	X	X		X	X
Annual Member	X	X	X	X	X
Non-Member	X	X	X		
Associate Member	X				

# PENCIL US IN!

## 2025 SPRING DISTRICT MEETING SCHEDULE



Mark your calendars!

Monday, March 10 | District VIII  
Tuesday, March 11 | District IX  
Wednesday, March 12 | District X  
Thursday, March 13 | District XI  
Tuesday, March 18 | District III  
Wednesday, March 19 | District I  
Thursday, March 20 | District II  
Tuesday, March 25 | District VII  
Wednesday, March 26 | District VI  
Thursday, March 27 | District V  
Friday, March 28 | District IV

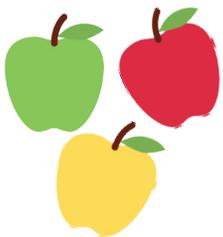
The LRTA Executive Board approved the following dates for the 2025 Spring District Meetings. Mark your calendars, and stay tuned for more information about the meeting details which will be published on [lrta.net](http://lrta.net).



We celebrated our youngest LRTA member in attendance at the October 29, 2024 LRTA State Meeting, Gail Thomas! In memory of Horace G. Robinson, this award grants a lifetime membership with LRTA. Welcome to the LRTA family!



Dr. Levon LeBan presented the Nathaniel "Nat" H. Lacour Award at the October 29, 2024 LRTA State Meeting, celebrating the oldest member present. Congratulations Ben Sandifer and thank you for your contributions to LRTA!



**RETIRED TEACHER DAY:  
MARCH 20, 2025**

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