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From: Virginia Governmental Employees Association (sent by Virginia Governmental Employees Association <sonyawilliams@vgea.ccsend.com>)

To: Johnna Cossaboon



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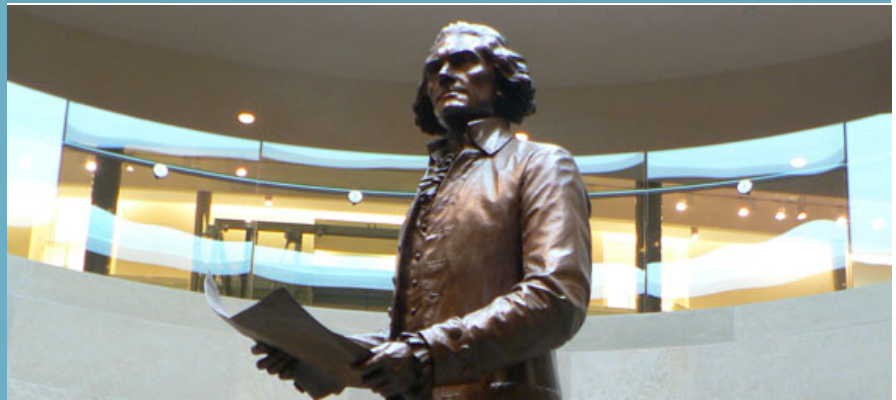
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2015 Session Results

March 4, 2015



Retiree COLA Announced

Effective August 1

The VRS Board announced last month that the 2015 Cost Of Living Adjustment (COLA) for State Retirees will result in an increase of 1.62 percent in monthly benefit payments. The raise

VGEA Retiree Life Insurance Bill Passes General Assembly!

In the waning hours of the 2015 General Assembly session, just at the point when one's faith might waver, House Bill 2277 was adopted by the House and Senate. The VGEA had been working on this important legislation for more than two years and it had been established as one of the top 2015 priorities of the VGEA Board of

will be effective July 1 and be reflected in the August 1 benefit payment for those who retired before February 1, 2013. Retirees' first COLA goes into effect the July 1 one full calendar year after you retire.

Deadline Extended

Hurry! Last Call!

The **deadline for submission of the 2015 VGEA Scholarship Application packets has been extended to 5 p.m. Friday, March 6.** If you have been a VGEA member for at least one year; you, your spouse, children and grandchildren are eligible to apply for one of four \$2,500 awards presented annually.

[Click here to download the application,](#) which contains the complete 2015 guidelines. The application is also available online at vgea.org (you must be a member to log-in and access the scholarship page). There are also a few new rules, so be sure to read the guidelines carefully. All post-high school students are eligible, as long as their college/university or graduate school is SCHEV certified (or

Directors.

So why is the bill meaningful? The new legislation provides a "floor," or minimum, for life insurance payouts for retirees who retired many years ago at a salary that has not kept up with the cost of living. **The bill provides for a minimum \$8,000 payout to beneficiaries for those retirees with at least 30 years of service,** and which going forward will be indexed at the same rate as any VRS Retiree COLA. We have **Delegate Riley E. Ingram and Senator Frank M. Ruff, Jr. to thank for their continued advocacy and support for state employees and retirees.**

We now need the Governor to sign it and then 2,100 retirees will immediately be positively impacted.

Great job, General Assembly! Thank you from the VGEA to every Senator and Delegate who voted for this commendable and worthy legislation!

State Employee Salary Increase Details and FAQ Answers

Last Friday when the Virginia General Assembly approved the amended budget, it included many positive changes for active state employee compensation packages as well as retiree benefits. We announced them in the last issue of the *eNews Special Legislative Report* and got a boatload of questions in return.

That's to be expected, because the natural questions when reading these reports are, "does this apply to me, my coworkers, or those who report to me?"

As a result, we've answered lots of emails. Following, you'll find more Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) details.

The approved Budget Bill (HB 1400) that has gone to the Governor for his signature, and includes:

another state's equivalent) and they have not won before.

The **deadline to return completed application packets is 5 p.m. Friday, March 6**. Be sure to submit your application packet on time and all together.

Anthem Participants' Data Breached

Nearly Four Million Affected

Anthem recently reported that almost four million Virginians are affected by a data breach that the company disclosed last month. State employees and retirees are likely included among them! VGEA members and Anthem participants should consider this credit monitoring link:

[https://www.anthemfacts.com/?cldee=ZWxhaW5laUBtY2N1ZW1vcnRnYWd1LmNvbQ%253D%](https://www.anthemfacts.com/?cldee=ZWxhaW5laUBtY2N1ZW1vcnRnYWd1LmNvbQ%253D%253D)

More information is available at the Department of Human Resource Management website:

<http://www.dhrm.virginia.gov/anthem-data-breach>

further information about identity

- A **2 percent across the board salary increase for active employees** in August 2015. **FAQ:** This will be calculated prior to any other increase for which the employee may qualify. Employee must have a rating of at least Contributor and part-timers are eligible at the Agency's discretion and budgetary availability.
- A **\$65 per year of continuous service compression raise** for active State employees with **five to 30 years of service, plus an \$80 per year increase for State Police Officers**. **FAQ:** If you left state employment, then returned; your most recent hiring date serves as your starting date for the compression raise. It is for CONTINUOUS employment (because **compression increases** are meant to **help equalize pay differences** between new employees hired at today's more competitive market salaries with those of longer-term employees hired at less competitive pay.)
- An additional **2 percent salary increase for 19 high turnover state job classifications**. **FAQ:** As defined in the amendment, these are: Law Enforcement Officer I; Direct Service Associate I; Direct Service Associate II; Direct Service Associate III; Housekeeping and/or Apparel Worker I; Probation Officer Assistant; Emergency Coordinator I; Emergency Coordinator II; Registered Nurse I; Registered Nurse II; Nurse Practitioner I/ Physician's Assistant; Licensed Practical Nurse; Therapy Assistant/ Therapist I; Therapist II; Compliance/ Safety Officer II; District Court Deputy Clerk, Grade 6; District Court Deputy Clerk, Grade 7; and District Court Deputy Clerk, Grade 8.
- A **\$1,000 per year increase for correctional officers and correctional officer seniors**. **FAQ:** \$1,000 salary increase for all correctional officers and all correctional officers senior who are employed at Department of Corrections facilities statewide, effective August 10. Some other closely related job titles are included, check with HR.
- A **2.5 percent salary increase for university and**

protection is available here:

<http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/Identity-Protection>



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college faculty. FAQ: Classified employees at the Commonwealth's higher education institutions **receive the raises for all State employees** (2 percent plus compression); **this additional 2.5 percent is at the university's discretion** and will be the average increase given **to faculty and administrative faculty at the state community colleges and four-year colleges and universities.**

- An **increase in the VRS employer contribution** to reach 90 percent of the actuarially established rates
- A **rollback of proposed increases in the State Health Insurance Fund deductibles and co-payments**, restoration of HIF interest earnings, and restoration of long-term care tax credits

Thanks for supporting the VGEA! We're stronger with you!

Health Insurance Update

In the Governor's introduced December Budget Bill, the administration proposed these changes to the \$1.0 Billion per year State Employee and Retiree Health Insurance Fund:

- For COVA Care (individual plan choices and dependent coverage will vary, so this is simply an example):
 - Premium increases of \$1 per month for active employees and \$15 per month for Retirees
 - For those enrolled in COVA Care Health Awareness, premiums would actually decrease by \$3 per month, and Retirees' premiums would increase by \$11 per month.
- An increase in provider deductibles from \$75/\$150 to \$300/\$600
- An increased annual out of pocket maximum from \$1,000/\$2,000 to \$2,500/\$5,000
- A reversion of interest earnings on the fund to help balance the General Fund Budget
- Various other changes to specific services are contemplated, some more costly and some less costly. Enrollees need to pay attention to future Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) communications for details

The General Assembly rejected a portion of the proposed changes, directing:

- The DHRM NOT increase the annual out-of-pocket maximum, and not transfer interest earnings to the General Fund, and instead retain those balances in the Health Insurance Fund to reduce future premiums and plan costs.

Legislation of Interest to VGEA Members

Go to the Legislative Information System for additional details at <http://lis.virginia.gov/lis.htm> enter the bill number (no spaces) and click go.

HB 1942 Health insurance; prior authorization for drug benefits.
- **Passed House and Senate**

HB 1969 Virginia Retirement System; cash balance retirement plan. - **Passed House and Senate**

HB 2277 Life insurance for retired state employees. - **Passed House and Senate**

HB 1400 Budget Bill. - **Passed House and Senate with Amendments**

HB 1466 Capitol Police; security for Gov-elect, Lt. Gov-elect, Att. General-elect, members of Court of Appeals. - **Passed House and Senate**

SB 813 Virginia Retirement System; technical amendments to the programs administered by System. - **Passed Senate and House**

SB 1121 IT responsibility of agency directors. - **Passed Senate and House**

HB 2081 Employers; disclosure of social media account information. - **Passed Senate and House**

HB 1916 Fraud and Abuse Whistle Blower Protection Act; definition of state agency. - **Passed House and Senate**

HB 1890 Virginia Retirement System; purchase of service credit for prior service. - **Passed Senate and House**

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