

February 5, 2017



eNews

Legislative Report

An electronic newsletter for members and friends of
The Virginia Governmental Employees Association

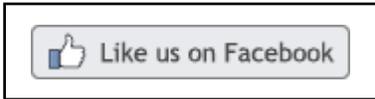
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VGEA legislation news

State employee raise in budgets!

Scholarship deadline extended

ABC to become 'Authority' in 2018



Pending Legislation Updates

This week's relevant state employee bill list update is now on the VGEA.org website. Please [click this link](#) to peruse the whole list of bills, or on the individual bill numbers below for summaries. Here are the top five bills/issues and where they are in the review process:

[HB1967](#) (Massie) - VRS; modifies hybrid retirement plan: tabled by the Appropriations Subcommittee for Compensation and Retirement, Feb. 2.

[HB1555](#) (Ware) - Agency directors; human resources training and succession planning: Reported unanimously from Appropriations Committee, Feb. 2. First reading in House Feb. 3.

[HB1768](#) (Garrett) - VRS to adopt stress testing and additional reporting methods: Passed unanimously in House, Feb. 3.

[HB2251](#) (Jones) - VRS; optional defined contribution retirement plan: House Appropriations

Three percent pay increase Effective July 10!

Plus additional adjustments for High turnover positions!

The House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees each met today - Sunday, February 5 - to present and approve their respective amendments to the 2016-2018 biennium budget (HB 1500 and SB 900). **Both included a 3 percent across-the-board pay raise for state classified employees (and similar positions in non-executive branch agencies) effective July 10, 2017.**

Unlike last year, this funding is **NOT CONTINGENT** on additional actions occurring, however employees must have attained a rating equivalent to "contributor" on their most recent performance evaluation to receive the increase.

Both budgets also contain additional salary actions targeted to improve starting salaries and market competitiveness for existing positions in the Virginia State Police. Additionally, the House budget includes pay improvements for the State Capitol Police.

Funds to improve the pay for some of Virginia's lowest paid and highest turnover state employee positions were also included in both budgets (House: an additional 2 percent, bringing the total increase to 5 percent; Senate: an additional 4 percent bringing the total increase to 7 percent). Those positions include:

- Direct Care Associate I
- Direct Care Associate II
- Direct Care Associate III
- Licensed Practical Nurse
- Registered Nurse I
- Registered Nurse II
- Nurse Practitioner/Physicians Assistant

The list of low-pay, high turnover positions targeted for increases by the House budget also includes:

- Housekeeping/Apparel Worker I
- Therapy Assistant
- Therapist I
- Therapist II

While these positions can be found in numerous state health, mental health and disability service agencies and facilities, the Senate budget limits the additional salary improvements to those working in facilities of

reported with substitute Feb. 3, read first time in House Feb. 4.

[SJ247](#) (Ruff) - JLARC study of total compensation: Senate Committee on Rules passed by indefinitely, Feb. 2.

We value your feedback, so please let us know (after you read the entire list) if there are more bills we should include. Email the information to info@vgea.org.

VGEA eNews is published by the Virginia Governmental Employees Association for members and friends.

Questions & Comments Welcome!

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the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services while the House budget would make improvements for the positions regardless of agency.

The Senate budget authorizes a 2 percent salary increase with accompanying funding for faculty at state colleges and universities; while the House would authorize a 3 percent increase with funding adjusted for each institution based on its FY 2017 salary actions. Some college and universities provided raises last year using university funds while others did not.

Funding is provided in both budgets for the Virginia Supreme Court, to improve the salary competitiveness of deputy district court clerks, although the amounts differ.

Also provided in both budgets was funding to support the JLARC study of total state employee compensation (due back this fall). Additionally, the House includes funding for agency training for succession planning while the Senate includes funds for the Department of Human Resource Management to participate in an occupationally-based data service. That service would provide improved information on state employee salary competitiveness, and to develop and administer an annual state employee satisfaction survey and a standardized employee exit survey. All of these items were initiatives of the Employee Retirement Security and Pension Reform Commission.

Overall, ***this is the best package of initiatives for state employees in a decade or more!***

VGEA advocacy works!

Thank you for your support. The **VGEA asked for your letters and delivered more than 100 pages of single-spaced personal stories to your legislators.**

[Go to the VGEA Facebook page to tell us what you think about this successful action.](#)

Deadline to apply for four VGEA \$2,500 Scholarships Extended!

The 2017 VGEA Scholarship application is available on the website's homepage at vgea.org.

You're eligible if you've been a **VGEA member for one year, and your spouse, children and grandchildren may also apply.**

The application **deadline has been extended to February 17.** Don't miss this chance to significantly boost your education funds! There are a total of **\$10,000 in scholarships available every year.**

ABC to Become 'Authority;' Will affect ABC employees

The ABC will officially become the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority on July 1, 2018. This year, during the transition from agency to "Authority," some things will change for ABC employees.

HB2247 Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority; eligibility of employees for Workforce Transition Act, is a bill that would address benefit changes that ABC employees receive, if they do, or don't, accept a comparable position with the new ABC Authority.

Some VGEA members have contacted us with these questions:

- ***If I'm not offered a comparable position with comparable pay with the Authority, I've heard that ABC has reduced the maximum severance benefit from 36 to 26 weeks. Is this true?***

The present bill (which passed out of the House Appropriations Compensation and Retirement subcommittee) does specify that **all the provisions of the Workforce Transition Act apply**, and that allows for a maximum 36 weeks of severance pay.

- ***If I accept a comparable position, I will then become an "At-Will Employee." Does that mean that I will have less job security than I do now with ABC as an agency?***

No, all "Authorities" which are state sanctioned have at-will employees. Your position is not imperiled any more as an at-will employee than as a regular state employee.

We value your feedback, so please let us know if there are other bills you are concerned about. Email the information to info@vgea.org.

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