

Subject: 2017 VGEA eNews Legislative Report

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From: VGEA (sent by VGEA <sonyawilliams@vgea.ccsend.com>)

To: Johnna Cossaboon



March 1, 2017

eNews

Legislative Report

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

End of Session:

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VGEA Peninsula Chapter Meeting

Join us on
March 9 at 6 p.m.
at **Tapps Restaurant**
1976 Power Plant Parkway
Hampton, VA 23666
(757) 827-8100

Last Legislation Update

Here are the two remaining bills/issues and their resolution:

[HB1555](#) (Ware) - Agency directors; human resources training and succession planning. A compromise passed both House and Senate and was sent to the Governor for action by March 27.

[HB1768](#) (Garrett) - VRS to adopt stress testing and additional reporting methods: Passed as [HB1768ER](#). Governor's action deadline is March 27.

Thank you for sending letters!

VGEA Advocacy Works

The VGEA asked for your letters about why you need a raise and subsequently delivered 110 pages of single-spaced personal stories to your legislators!

Here's an important reply we received:

Dear VGEA Board and Members,

Thank you for your packet of letters regarding state employee compensation and retirement. Yes, especially in our most recent years, our state workforce has been asked to do more with less, but they have risen to the challenge. Thank you all for your commitment and service to our Commonwealth. Your hard work and dedication has not gone unnoticed or unappreciated, though our budget has not necessarily always reflected those sentiments.



Senator Emmett Hanger (right) spoke this session at a press conference, along with Delegates Steve Landes and Chris Jones (from left).

As the Co-Chair of the Senate Finance Committee, and a budget conferee, I am pleased that our budget provides funding for a 3 percent salary increase for state employees in their August 1, 2017 paycheck, and a 2 percent salary increase for state-supported local employees. The budget also provides an additional 2 percent pay raise for nine job roles that continue to have high turnover in the medical/mental health services field; effective September 10, 2017 for the purposes of relieving salary compression and maintaining market relevance. We are also moving forward with the comprehensive study by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study benefits and pay for the Commonwealth's workforce.

I will continue to pursue efforts to ensure our workforce is

**Join VGEA Now
Then apply for \$10,000
in 2018 Scholarships!**

Tell your friends who are attending college or have students in their family that if they join VGEA now, then next year they can apply to be awarded one of four \$2,500 scholarships.

You're only eligible if you've been a VGEA member for one year, then you, your spouse, children and grandchildren may apply for the awards.

Look for the 2018 application on our website next fall. Don't miss this chance to significantly boost your education funds! There are **four \$2,500 scholarships available every year**, and a maximum of 100 applications are accepted.



VGEA eNews
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**Questions &
Comments are Welcome!**

Please contact:

Editor
Johnna Cossaboon
*Communications & Advocacy
Director, at 804-228-4513 or
email jcossaboon@vgea.org*

competitive and marketable. Thank you for your continued efforts to advocate as an Association for the betterment of our workforce.

*Best wishes!
Sincerely,*

Emmett W. Hanger, Jr.

State Employee Pay Raises **Budget Approved and Sent to Governor**

On Saturday, February 25, the House and Senate each approved the budget conference report with only one dissenting vote. The budget now goes to Governor Terry McAuliffe who has 30 days in which to submit amendments, veto items or sign the bill as presented.

Highlights include the 3 percent across-the-board pay raise for state classified employees (and similar positions in non-executive branch agencies). The 3 percent salary increase will be in August 1 paychecks.

As state employees well remember, in two of the last three years the raises failed to occur because of shortfalls in state General Fund revenues. That is not the case for the 2017 salary increase! However, employees still must have attained a rating equivalent to "contributor" or better on their most recent performance evaluation to receive the raise.

Some of Virginia's lowest paid and/or highest turnover state employee positions will also receive an additional 2 percent raise, bringing their total increase to 5 percent. Those positions include:

Direct Service Associate I, Direct Service Associate II, Direct Service Associate III, Licensed Practical Nurse, Registered Nurse I, Registered Nurse II/Nurse Practitioner/Physicians Assistant, Housekeeping/Apparel Worker I, Therapy Assistant, Therapist I and Therapist II.

That raise will be effective September 10 and applies to those job positions across **all** state agencies.

For faculty at state colleges and universities, the budget provides a 2 percent increase for all institutions. Colleges are also given the authority to grant larger increases at their discretion, using other funding sources. An additional 1 percent increase is provided for those eight institutions that did not give faculty raises in 2016.

Classified employees and university staff in higher education will receive a 3 percent salary increase like the rest of the state workforce.

Funding is provided for the Virginia Supreme Court to improve the salary competitiveness of deputy district court clerks. The budget also contains additional actions to improve starting salaries and market competitiveness for the Virginia State Police as well as pay improvements for the State Capitol Police.

Funding is included to support the JLARC study of total state employee compensation (due back this fall). Additionally, the new budget adds funding for agency training for succession planning as well as funds for the Department of Human Resource Management to participate in an occupationally-based data service, and administer a standardized employee exit survey. All of these items were initiatives of the Employee Retirement Security and Pension Reform Commission.

This is the best package of pay improvements for state employees in a decade or more! The VGEA will continue to update you when Governor McAuliffe takes budget action.

Many thanks to the budget conferees for their work to put a budget together that would improve compensation for state workers:
House: Delegates Chris Jones, Tag Greason, Kirk Cox, Steve Landes,

John O'Bannon and Luke Torian.

Senate: Senators Emmett Hanger, Tommy Norment, Bill Newman, Dick Saslaw, Frank Ruff, Janet Howell and Frank Wagner.

VGEA, 1011 East Main Street, Suite 400, Richmond, VA 23219

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