



TEXAS STATE EMPLOYEES UNION UPDATE



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TSEU members in action on all fronts



State worker turnover near record high!

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getting a grip on:

STATE EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

Lack of pay raises, high workloads push rates to 15-year high

According to the State Auditor’s annual report on state employee turnover, Texas saw its highest turnover rate across all state agencies this year since 2000. The average turnover for all state agencies in Fiscal Year 2015 was 18%, but some agency turnover rates climbed as high as 20%-30%. Numbers for some of the largest state agencies are posted below.

The reasons for the mass exodus are also highlighted in the report: low pay and high workloads. According to exit surveys, 71% of responding employees who quit the state were headed to higher paying jobs. The majority of state workers have seen

just a 2.9% increase in take-home pay since 2008. Inflation has risen 10.2% during this same period. While the average state employee earns around \$36,000/year, thousands of state workers earn less than \$25,000/year with little hope of ever advancing beyond that. In agencies with the highest turnover rates, poor working conditions and low pay were consistently cited as the top reasons people quit their jobs.

TSEU President Judy Lugo had this to say: “State employees are getting squeezed from both sides: our paychecks get smaller as our health care costs go up and at the same time our workloads keep going up as more and more Texans seek services. A lot of state workers are just throwing up their hands and saying, ‘enough’s enough!’”

A reduced turnover rate would also mean more efficiency in state government because there would be enough staff to provide services quickly and professionally to Texas citizens. Texas’ population has increased by close to 50% since

1994. Over that same time period, the total

number of state agency employees has

decreased by 4%. Changes in technology,

policies, and procedures

don’t make up for the difference

between Texas’ population and

the state employee workforce.

More Texans means more citizens

in need of state services.

A shrinking workforce with

a high turnover rate creates a

barrier to services and programs

that are vital to our communities.

An across-the-board pay raise for

all state workers is an investment

from which all Texans will benefit.

FY 2015 Turnover

Juvenile Justice Dept (TJJD) **26.6%**

Criminal Justice (TDCJ) **21.8%**

Aging and Disability Services (DADS) **32.2%**

School for the Deaf **27.9%**

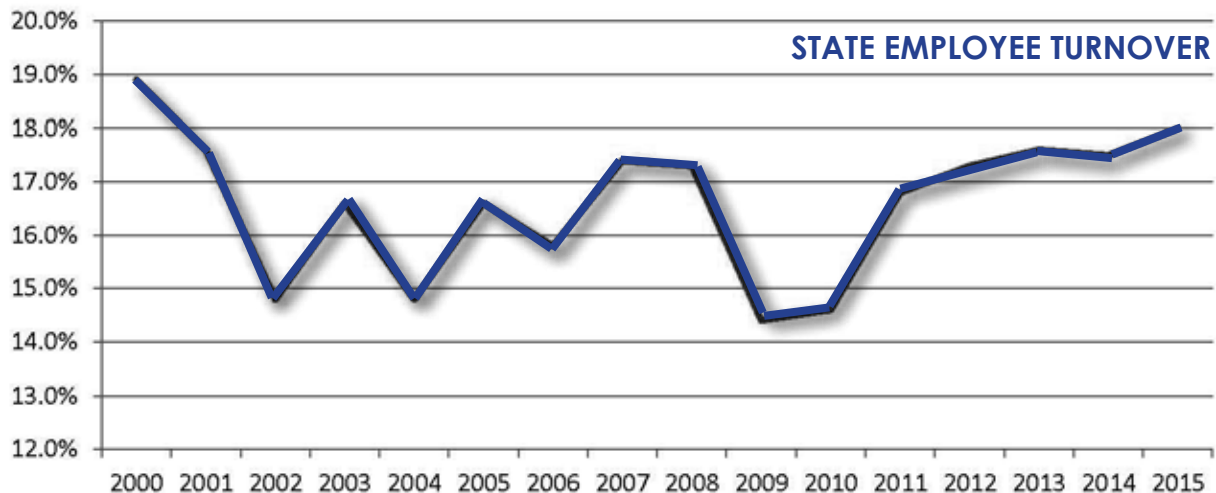
DFPS **19.4%**

State Health Services (DSHS) **23.3%**

HHSC **17.6%**

\$361 MILLION: The estimated cost of turnover to taxpayers

The high turnover rate in state agencies means taxpayers are wasting hundreds of millions of dollars year after year in training expenses for new employees. Higher wages for front-line state employees would reduce those costs by incentivizing trained and experienced employees to stick with the state. In 2000, the last time turnover reached above 18%, the State Auditor’s Office estimated the cost to taxpayers at \$361 million (in 2015 dollars).





State employees are getting squeezed from both sides: our paychecks get smaller as our health care costs go up and at the same time our workloads keep going up as more and more Texans seek services. A lot of state workers are just throwing up their hands and saying, 'enough's enough!'"

TSEU PRESIDENT JUDY LUGO
HHSC PROGRAM MANAGER, AUSTIN



An easy solution to the Turnover Crisis:

ONE

increase wages across-the-board to keep state jobs competitive with private sector

TWO

keep up with the needs of a growing population by increasing agency staffing levels

THREE

protect our pension benefits from cuts and keep our health care affordable

It's not rocket science: state workers are leaving state employment in record numbers because of the triple pressures of stagnant wages, high workloads, and eroding pension and health care benefits. The obvious solution is for lawmakers to invest in public services and public employees!

TEXAS CAN AFFORD IT

In the last legislative session, lawmakers decided to not spend \$6.4 billion in state funds (not including the \$11 billion in the state's *Rainy Day Fund*). These funds could have significantly lowered caseloads, workloads, and the need for mandatory overtime; while increasing safety for staff and clients, as well as improving overall delivery of state services.

Here's just some of what \$6.4 billion **COULD HAVE** done for Texas:

- \$3.8 billion a \$6,000/year raise for state agency and university employees
- \$514 million 4,000 more FPS staff
- \$194 million 1,700 more HHSC staff
- \$102 million 1,000 more DADS direct care workers, caseworkers, nurses
- \$56 million 500 more Parole staff
- \$34 million 300 more TJJD staff

TOTAL COST \$4.7 BILLION

In this budget scenario, there is still an additional \$1.7 billion which could go towards education, state employee pensions, and infrastructure projects. **It would also leave the state's \$11 billion Rainy Day Fund untouched.**

What can we do to make it happen?

WE ORGANIZE!

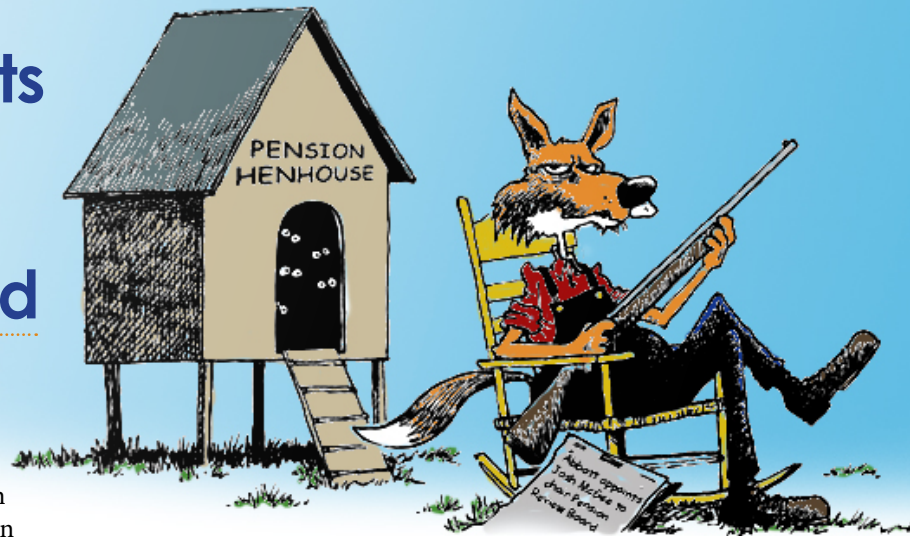


It's obvious that the political will doesn't exist in the Legislature to spend our state's resources on the needs of its citizens. That means we have to build the power to change that political will. We must organize our coworkers and fellow retirees into the union so that we can have the power to win on our issues. Only a growing movement of tens of thousands of state workers and retirees will have the power to take on the anti-state services crowd in Austin. Sitting on the sidelines or waiting to see what happens isn't going to help anyone. We have to step up and take action to improve our lives and the lives of all those who depend on state services!

Join TSEU or sign up a coworker today!

Gov. Abbott appoints noted anti-pension advocate to head Pension Review Board

TSEU calls on leaders to get 'the fox out of our henhouse'



In November, Governor Abbott appointed anti-pension lobbyist Josh McGee as chairman of the Texas Pension Review Board. McGee is Vice President of the Laura and John Arnold Foundation – a private organization that advocates phasing out state employee pensions and forcing public workers into high-risk 401(k) style retirement plans. Unlike our current pension system, 401(k) defined contribution plans leave employees and retirees unprotected from stock market risks and do not provide lifetime retirement security.

In recent years, anti-pension shill groups such as the Arnold Foundation have lobbied local, state and federal governments to force these changes onto public employees. They falsely claim that our pension systems are financially unsustainable and a burden on tax payers. In reality, this is just a blatant attempt by Wall Street fund managers to privatize and profit off public pensions at the expense of hard working employees and retirees. By charging numerous fees and skimming from the top, the Wall Street firms managing 401(k)s stand to make unimaginable wealth if our pensions were to be switched to defined contribution schemes. The majority of Texas public pension systems are adequately funded and performing well above national standards. Governor Abbott's decision to appoint Josh McGee to the Pension Review

Board shows that he favors Wall Street interests over those who have dedicated their careers to public service.

The Texas Pension Review Board is an independent state agency whose mission is to monitor the financial stability of all Texas public retirement systems and recommend policy and legislation to governing bodies. However, any specific changes made to state pension plans have to be passed into law through the Texas Legislature. The board consists of seven members who are appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Texas Senate.

The governor's board appointment is only a piece of a larger movement to dismantle public employee pensions. Other anti-pension groups such as the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) and Texas Public Policy Foundation (TPPF) have repeatedly advocated for cuts and drastic changes

to public employee pension and health care benefits. TSEU has fought off past attempts to cut benefits and convert our pension plans to 401(k) defined contribution systems. As recently as the 2015 legislative session, TSEU was instrumental in defeating proposed pension cuts on employees enrolled in the Employee Retirement System (ERS).



Get the fox out of our henhouse! **TAKE ACTION NOW!**

TSEU members are pushing back by calling state senators and asking them to oppose Josh McGee's appointment. This appointment still requires State Senate approval. You can find out who your state senator is by entering your home address at www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us.

Call their office and ask them to oppose the appointment of Josh McGee to chair the Texas Pension Review Board.

small cities BIG GROWTH



[LEFT] Del Rio HHSC is now majority union! Seen here Del Rio HHSC members (STANDING L-R) Arnie Zamora, Maria Estela Gomez, Velma Valdez, Vanessa Munoz; and from DADS (SEATED L-R) Petra Barbery and Janina Inez Chavez.

[RIGHT] At the close of their Organizing Committee meeting, Eagle Pass members signed up new member Nancy Ledesma. Pictured are Eagle Pass Organizing Committee members: Maria Linda Ruiz, DSHS; Maria D.J. Ramirez and Nancy Ledesma, CPS; and Patricia Dominguez, DSHS.

TSEU is growing fast in small towns across the state. That growth is giving state workers in places like Del Rio and Eagle Pass a new voice. TSEU's monthly building luncheons in those cities bring together representatives from various agencies. Members share information about their departments and learn more about the union. After the meetings, TSEU members take back information to co-workers in surrounding offices like Hondo, Crystal City and Uvalde. That communication is especially important, because of worker mobility in our more rural communities and towns.

Federal judge brings the hammer down on unsafe caseloads

Lower Caseloads, Reforms and Oversight ordered

In December, after weeks of trial and nearly a year of deliberation, Senior US District Judge Janis Graham Jack issued a 250 page decision that has brought systemic failures in DFPS to the forefront. Judge Jack found that DFPS violated the constitutional rights of children in care to be kept from an unreasonable risk of harm by the State. The ruling states that the agency was deliberately indifferent to the needs of foster children, ignored decades of reports and recommendations to correct problems, and departed from professional judgement in implementing policies and procedures. The state has appealed the decision to the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals.

The decision echoes what TSEU members have been saying for years - we need lower caseloads to better protect the most vulnerable Texans. The ruling states, "DFPS has done little to address this problem. It has not created a caseload range, it has not hired enough primary caseworkers, and it has not instituted policies to reduce caseworker turnover."

This is an extremely important development that may lead not only to the establishment of concrete caseload standards, but also the staff required to make the standards a reality.

The ruling describes other internal reform efforts as failures and as unreasonable responses to protect the Texans we serve, which sends a clear message that the status quo is unacceptable. Judge Jack wrote, "The reality is that DFPS has ignored 20 years of reports, outlining problems and recommending solutions. DFPS has also ignored professional standards... The Court has no assurance that anything has changed. Of the two reforms to which DFPS pointed- CPS Transformation and Foster Care Redesign-one was instituted in the wake of this lawsuit, the other is an abject failure..."

WHAT'S NEXT?

Pending the state's appeal, a Special Master will be appointed by the Judge to produce and oversee an Implementation Plan. Children's Rights, the organization that filed the lawsuit, and DFPS will be involved in the selection of the Special Master, as well as the development of the Implementation Plan. The Court will make final decisions about the Special Master and the Implementation Plan, and will receive regular updates on whether goals have been met. The Special Master is to be appointed by 30 days from the Dec. 17th ruling, and the Implementation Plan is to be presented to the Court 180 days following the appointment.

“ *The reality is that DFPS has ignored 20 years of reports, outlining problems and recommending solutions. DFPS has also ignored professional standards...*

The Court has no assurance that anything has changed. Of the two reforms to which DFPS pointed- CPS Transformation and Foster Care Redesign-one was instituted in the wake of this lawsuit, the other is an abject failure..."

- US District Judge Janis Graham Jack

WHAT ARE THE GOALS?

CASELOAD STANDARDS

- The ruling requires that a Special Master, appointed by the Court, establish a recommended caseload within Conservatorship and CCL/RCCL and requires the state to meet these levels. While the ruling doesn't directly call for establishing standards in every part of the agency, the "Deliberate Indifference" towards case load levels is strongly criticized and condemned.

ACCURATE INFORMATION

- The smoke and mirrors method currently used to report case load levels will be replaced by a "per-child" case-load count. The ruling specifically criticizes the use of "fictive workers" made up out of overtime hours, and the inclusion of workers in training and secondary workers to bring down caseload calculations.

CLEAR VISION

- Despite numerous reports, studies, and recommendations, progress on reducing caseloads wasn't achieved because of a lack of "institutional memory." Internal reforms, transformations and redesigns repeated earlier experiments without addressing the most critical problem. Establishing caseload standards, and defining a reasonable workload as the level at which caseworkers are able to perform their basic functions and are not compelled to quit at an unreasonable rate, are important steps in improving services, lowering caseloads, and developing a stable workforce.

FPS DAY OF ACTION | MARCH 9 | the Capitol

TSEU/FPS members will be heading to the Capitol on Wednesday, March 9th to meet with legislative offices about the Federal Court ruling and to urge their support for caseload standards in all parts of DFPS. **Join us at the Capitol - the voice of frontline employees needs to be loud and clear - WE NEED LOWER CASELOADS NOW!**

For more details, contact your organizer, nearest TSEU office or TSEU/FPS Caucus Organizer Myko Gedutis
PHONE 713-661-9030 EMAIL mgedutis@cwa-tseu.org

Gearing up for the Primary Elections

EARLY VOTE February 16-26 ELECTION DAY Tuesday, March 1



This year, we have the potential to reshape the makeup of the state capitol for the next legislative session. Whether or not state workers and retirees can win on our issues in 2017 will largely depend on how successful TSEU and our allies are in winning key elections around the state. The March 1st primaries will set the stage for all of our fights ahead.

In the 2014 Primaries, anti-state worker/state services Tea Party Republicans won 39 of 56 primary races with the backing of a well-funded political organization known as Empower Texans. Their electoral victories resulted in a

series of attacks on state employees and state services during the 2015 Legislative Session. Such attacks included attempts to eliminate longevity pay, close state supported living centers, and to bust public sector unions by prohibiting payroll deduction for union dues. Fortunately, TSEU was able to stop these vicious attacks. However, Tea Party candidates with the backing of groups like Empower Texans will be trying to increase their power by winning more elections in the 2016 Primaries.

PRIMARY ELECTION WORK: Dates are subject to change - more phone banks and block walks are being added all the time! Contact the office listed for the most up-to-date details.

AUSTIN - 512.448.4225

- PHONE BANKS: Held at 6PM at the Austin TSEU Office, 1700 South 1st Street TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16 MONDAY, FEBRUARY 29
- BLOCK WALKS: Held at 10:00AM, location TBA SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20 SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27

SAN ANTONIO - 210.354.2900

- PHONE BANKS: Held at 6:00PM at the San Antonio Office, 454 Soledad Street, #R200 TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16 MONDAY, FEBRUARY 29
- BLOCK WALKS: Held at 10:00AM, location TBA SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13 SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27

DALLAS - 214.942.4305

- PHONE BANKS: Held at time listed at Dallas TSEU office, 737 S RL Thornton Fwy, Ste B TUESDAY, FEB 16, 6:00PM MONDAY, FEB 29, 6:00PM

EL PASO - 512.448.4225

- BLOCK WALKS: Held at 10:00AM, location TBA SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20 SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27

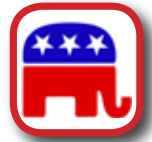
HOUSTON - 713.661.9030

- PHONE BANKS: Held at time listed at Houston TSEU office 9247 South Main Street MON, FEB 15, 10AM-3:00PM MONDAY, FEB 22, 6:00PM MONDAY, FEB 29, 6:00PM
- BLOCK WALKS: Held at 10:00AM, location TBA SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20



On the Democratic side, we have to elect those candidates who will actively fight for state employees and not just pay lip service to our issues.

On the Republican side, if more Tea Party candidates beat out traditional Republicans, there will be even more attacks on our pay, benefits, public services, and even on our very right to organize a union.



For those reasons, it is crucial that state employees join COPE and get active in election work. To increase our success in the Texas Capitol, TSEU needs greater influence over who gets elected. We do this by going door to door and making phone calls to get people out to vote in addition to asking our coworkers to join the union and COPE. By increasing state employee political power now, we can be in a better position to win in 2017!

Important Victory for TSEU in Houston Mayor's Race!

In December, State Rep. Sylvester Turner was victorious in a closely decided run-off election for Houston mayor. Turner (endorsed by TSEU) stood with workers and helped fight off union-busting legislation and attempts to weaken our pension systems during the 2015 Legislative Session.

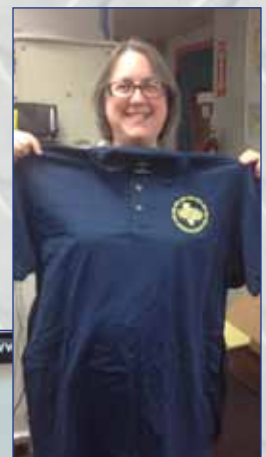
This election was a critical battle in the war to protect public employee pensions. Mayor Turner's opponent was a very vocal advocate for stripping government employees of their defined benefit pension plans and forcing us into risky 401(k)'s. Turner's victory sends a strong message that public employees are organized and ready to fight back against attacks on our pensions.

TSEU, in coalition with other labor unions, knocked on over 65,000 doors in the general election and another 100,000 in the runoff. The Houston TSEU-COPE Committee especially had a significant impact on the outcome of this election. COPE Committee members met regularly throughout the election season to coordinate block walks and phone banks to turnout the vote. All that work helped pull off a major win a victory for working people!



Supporting the friends of State Workers and State Services!

Help make to TSEU unbreakable by getting FIVE current members to sign an 'UNBREAKABLE' form and you will receive the 'limited edition' Unbreakable TSEU polo-style shirt. These are first-come, first-served, but you have to have your five completed forms! Please coordinate form collection with your local TSEU office.



Joan Barasch
HHSC-San Antonio



Sheryl Ross
DFPS-Houston



Doing my part to make TSEU:



NAME _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____ CITY / STATE / ZIP _____

HOME PHONE _____ WORK PHONE _____ CELL PHONE _____

EMAIL _____ AGENCY/UNIVERSITY _____ FACILITY / LOCATION / DEPT _____

If dues deduction from my salary or wages becomes prohibited by law, I authorize Texas State Employees Union / CWA (TSEU) to commence and continue deducting my monthly TSEU dues from the bank or credit union account identified immediately below, in the same monthly dues amount as then on file with TSEU. (initial box at right)

INITIAL

BANK NAME _____ BANK ADDRESS _____

ROUTING # _____ ACCOUNT # _____

YES, I want to help build our political power by joining CWA COPE. I authorize TSEU to draft the account listed above monthly for the amount that I have indicated and to forward these funds to CWA COPE.

	COPE CLUB	PLATINUM QUORUM	TRIPLE QUORUM	OTHER
MONTHLY DEDUCTION AMOUNT:	[] \$5.00 [] \$10.00	[] \$20.00	[] \$30.00	[] _____

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

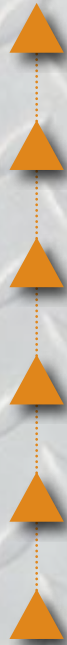
This authorization is voluntarily made based on my specific understanding that: The signing of this authorization card and the making of contributions to CWA COPE PC are not conditions of membership in the union nor of employment with the company that I may refuse to do so without fear of reprisal.

Keeping our Union UNBREAKABLE

Lt. Governor Dan Patrick and Tea Party groups like Empower Texans have made it crystal clear that they intend to once again try to bust public employee unions across Texas. Our union has a big target on it in the next legislative session.

In 2015, TSEU members and allies narrowly defeated Senate Bill 1968. If passed, SB 1968 would have made the voluntary payment of dues to public employee unions through payroll deduction illegal. This would have forced thousands of TSEU members to rejoin the union and begin paying their dues by check or bankdraft. Payroll deduction is by far the most convenient and secure method for state employees and retirees to join the union. SB 1968 was a blatant attempt to weaken our union and make it more difficult for state workers and retirees to have a strong voice with the power to win on our issues.

Lt. Gov. Patrick announced recently that the issue of payroll deduction would be included in the Senate Interim charges, virtually guaranteeing that legislation on the issue will be introduced in the 2017 legislative session. In response, TSEU members have launched our Unbreakable campaign to both ramp up our efforts to defeat these attempts to bust our union, and to prepare for a possible switch to a bank draft system of dues if we lose the right to payroll deduction. So far, over 1,600 TSEU members have signed authorizations to switch their dues over to bank draft in the event we lose payroll deduction. The goal is to have all 11,000 TSEU members ready to switch over by September 2017.



Send in your UNBREAKABLE form today!

Complete the form above including as much of your bank account information as you can and initial the box. **Not already a COPE member?** Use the same form above to join COPE TODAY (optional). You can return your completed form to your organizer or by mail to the Austin TSEU office.



Higher Education Deserves: A SEAT AT THE TABLE

Our voice on the TRS Board of Trustees in jeopardy

Karen Charleston, a TSEU member from Prairie View A&M, has been the voice of higher education employees on the Teacher Retirement System Board of Trustees since 2011. After running as the TSEU candidate and receiving the most votes in the election for the TRS Board higher education seat, she was appointed to the seat by Governor Perry.

At that time, the TRS Board consisted of nine members; five members appointed directly by the Governor and four seats designated for specific groups participating in the the TRS: two for public school employees, one for retired TRS members, and one for higher education employees. Instead of direct elections, the governor appointed one of the top three vote-getters for each of these seats. This meant that public school employees, retired TRS members AND higher education employees were guaranteed a voice on the Board of Trustees.

In 2011, the Legislature passed a law that abolished the higher education seat, replacing it with an "open" seat. Without a designated higher education seat, university employees could lose their voice on the TRS Board of Trustees when Karen's term expires in 2017.

WHAT IS THE TRS?

The TRS provides retirement and related benefits for those public schools and higher education employees. The TRS Board manages a \$132 billion trust fund established to finance member benefits. Nearly 1.4 million employees and retirees participate in the system – including 143,000 higher ed. employees.

TSEU'S POSITION: Higher education employees, with their futures and livelihoods invested in the TRS, deserve a voice on the Board of Trustees. In an "open" election, university employees will be outnumbered ten to one by public school employees and current retirees who will run their own candidates for this seat. The TRS board thrives by having a diversity of opinion amongst its board members and it will suffer greatly if it loses the perspective coming out of the higher education community. TSEU is committed to restoring guaranteed representation for university workers on the TRS Board of Trustees.

TSEU / University members launch campaign to save TRS Board of Trustees seat

TAKE ACTION NOW:

Sign the TRS petition to ask legislators to restore the higher education seat to the TRS Board, ask the governor to re-appoint Karen Charleston to the seat, and commit to vote for Karen in the 2017 elections!

Get involved! Contact your local TSEU office about how to get involved in getting Karen re-elected to the TRS Board and restoring the higher education seat in 2017.

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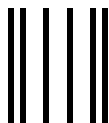
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TEXAS STATE EMPLOYEES UNION/CWA

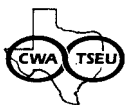
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1700 South 1st Street, Austin, Texas 78704 (512) 448-4225

T.I.N. No. 15102561097-001



SECTION A: AGENCY USE ONLY

AGENCY NAME	AGENCY#	UNIT#	FIRST ACTIVE DUTY DATE

SECTION B: EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

SOCIAL SECURITY #	NAME (LAST, FIRST, MI)		
EMPLOYEE ID #	E-MAIL ADDRESS (SUITABLE FOR RECEIVING TSEU CORRESPONDENCE)		
HOME STREET ADDRESS		CITY / STATE / ZIP	
HOME PHONE ()	WORK PHONE ()	CELL PHONE ()	
AGENCY / UNIV.	FACILITY / LOCATION		
PROG / DEPT / UNIT	JOB TITLE	WORK HOURS	



N U RR ORG: _____

SECTION C: MEMBERSHIP AND AUTHORIZATION

Membership dues and effective date of payroll deduction: the 1st day of _____, 20____
(MONTH)

- \$16 - salary below \$20,000 \$19 - salary \$20,000 - \$25,000 \$22 - salary \$25,000 - \$30,000
 \$25 - salary over \$30,000 OTHER \$ _____

AUTHORIZATION: I authorize the monthly deduction from my salary or wages for membership dues to TSEU. I understand that I may revoke this authorization at any time by written notice.

EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE

DATE

I agree to comply with the rules adopted by the Comptroller concerning deductions for membership dues.

HHSC workers feel the squeeze

Business Process Reengineering (BPR) falls short

As reported earlier by TSEU, Texas is experiencing a 15 year high in turnover for state agencies. HHSC is being hit particularly hard. Currently, about 1.5 million Texas households receive aid from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. This is up from 505,968 in 2000. The percentage of Texas households on food stamps has increased from 6.9% in 2000 to around 14% in 2015, yet HHSC employs 4500 fewer caseworkers to process these demands. On top of this sad truth, additional stress has been added to caseworkers due to added expectations from BPR and more Texans taking advantage of the ACA (Obamacare). Higher workloads are leading to an exodus of highly skilled, tenured employees.

Agency officials admitted this was a major problem in their own report to the Sunset Commission:

While staffing issues are ever-present across all agencies, inability to maintain or increasing experienced personnel at levels to match caseload growth inhibits HHSC's ability to deliver benefits. Compounding this challenge, staff retention, high turnover rates, and a less tenured eligibility workforce make it difficult to effectively respond to caseload increases and maintain performance.

The Human services administration sought out BPR as an intended cure-all for its massive turnover problem.

In 2014, HHSC administrators stated that the "roll out of the Business Process Reengineering (BPR) pilot would alleviate high workloads because the application and renewal processes would be stripped of unnecessary steps." But just stripping steps isn't an adequate solution when the problem is an increase in applications being received by state agencies. In fact, as predicted, the BPR rollout has caused its own set of problems such as a lack of accountability with errors, repeated technical failures, and an emphasis on quantity over quality work.

The real solution for an increase in demand should be to hire and train more staff. The state is instead trying to meet the

higher demand for services by increasing pressure and monitoring on current staff. They do so with a BPR system that is designed to track key strokes and uses analytics to determine how "hard" an individual is working. This is without any concept of the application process, language barrier, or fatigue of an employee forced to work a 60 hour week. Workers have been turned into parts of a machine that is being used to churn out applications faster with little regard for quality.

As in other agencies, increased workload demands, combined with stagnant pay and a rising cost-of-living are driving up the turnover rates in HHSC. What's worse, the agency recently announced an indefinite delay in the Federal enhancement bonus. The delay is due to a federal government audit of HHSC's performance numbers, casting into doubt the supposed success of the BPR rollout.

The position of agency leaders that changing the application process would end the workload crisis in HHSC is proving to be overly optimistic, and not in the spirit of Health and Human Services overall objective of providing needed assistance to qualified Texans. State employees are hardworking and dedicated. What's needed is enough staff to do our job properly and an across-the-board pay raise so that we can make ends meet.



TSEU/HHSC statewide caucus meeting held this past Fall in Austin. Contact your nearest TSEU office or organizer for details on upcoming statewide meetings as well as local or regional meetings.

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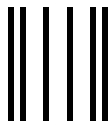
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Organizing in full swing at TJJJ

Members working to stop closures, improve conditions

A recent news article in the Houston Chronicle outlined the possibility of up to three more TJJJ facility closures in the next legislative session. The prediction was made based on a declining youth population in TJJJ as the state implements its “regionalization” plan to divert more youth away from TJJJ placements to county-run facilities.

TSEU members have always placed a priority on finding the appropriate secure placement for each youth in the juvenile justice system, whether that’s at the county or the state level. However,

in pushing the plan to divert more felony offender youths to county-level supervision, many lawmakers ignore the fact that most youths committed to TJJJ have already been through the county juvenile system and recommitted another offense. In 2013, 76% of youths in TJJJ were already on probation when they committed another offense and were sentenced to TJJJ. This shows the need for a state-run system of juvenile facilities that can deal with the worst youth offenders who aren’t successful under county-level supervision.

Union members in TJJJ facilities across the state are organizing their coworkers and building momentum for the next legislative session. We’re asking coworkers to join and help us fight for:

1. No closures of existing facilities
2. 1:8 JCO-to-youth ratio to end mandatory overtime and repeated 12-hour shifts
3. Across-the-board pay raises for all staff
4. Increased staffing levels of case managers to reduce caseloads
5. Inclusion of JCO’s and Case Managers in the LECOSRF 20-year retirement plan



TSEU members from [RIGHT] Dallas, [ABOVE] San Antonio, Houston, and Austin marched in remembrance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. this past January 18. Beyond his legacy as a civil rights leader, MLK was also a labor union activist. TSEU proudly marches along with thousands of others in honor of this great man, his work and his legacy.

Remembering MLK

TSEU members participate in MLK celebrations across Texas



Celebrating the Holidays

Area TSEU offices, others hold holiday parties



This past holiday season, TSEU members and all area offices hosted a number of gatherings. In the North Texas area, we had parties for Terrell, Fort Worth, Denton and our main party at the Dallas office. Members in South Texas celebrated at the Valley and San Antonio TSEU offices as well as in Corpus Christi. West Texas members held gatherings in El Paso and Odessa; while the Austin and Houston TSEU offices hosted their annual events as well. As the holidays are a time for family, it’s nice to celebrate with our union brothers and sisters!

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- **Seth Hutchinson** (TSEU Austin) Vice President
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Successful union organizing blitz makes its final stop in central Texas

Human Services blitz organizes 175 total new members

During January 11-15, TSEU activists and organizers worked together to sign up a total of 15 new HHSC members and collected 26 UNBREAKABLE Bank Draft forms as part of the Central Texas leg of the Fall Human Services Blitz. The intent of the Blitz was to grow our strength while informing members and non-members of new and upcoming battles in 2016. Signatures were collected to help influence the legislature for a REAL pay raise while current TSEU

members also filled out UNBREAKABLE forms (see page 6) designed as an insurance policy against attacks to our dues deduction. TSEU commends Philip Castro, Killeen; Laura Kendrick, Bryan; Velma Villanueva, Temple; and Judy Guajardo, Waco; for work done at their local offices.

Let's keep the ball rolling! We need our co-workers off the sidelines and in the game in order to win on our issues! Contact any TSEU office for additional forms, fliers or other TSEU materials.

BY THE NUMBERS: This past Fall/Winter, union members in HHSC and DADS offices worked hard to ask coworkers to join TSEU; fellow TSEU members to build our Unbreakable campaign; and mobilized ALL for a REAL raise in 2017. In all, the blitz ended up with:

- 175 new members
- 21 new COPE members
- 246 signing the Unbreakable form

