



# TEXAS STATE EMPLOYEES UNION UPDATE



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## 84th INSIDE THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE

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Hundreds of TSEU members, family, friends, allies and more gather in Austin at the capitol for:

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## Budget

At the beginning of the Legislative Session, The state of Texas had an estimated \$18 billion budget surplus plus another \$11 billion in the “Rainy Day Fund”, adding up to nearly \$30 billion in additional funding above the current budget available for the 2016-2017 biennium. Despite the pressing need to provide an across-the-board pay raise for state workers and retirees, and to increase funding for state services and higher education, many lawmakers saw the excess funds as an opportunity to give tax cuts to businesses and large corporations.

*“We need to deal with the real problems of this state first and then deal with tax cuts... I cannot support tax cuts until I know there's a plan in place to meet the needs of this state.”*

**Senator Kevin Elife (R-Tyler)**

Since November 2014, when a large number of anti-state services and anti-state worker candidates were elected to the Texas Legislature, TSEU knew that we were heading into one of the most difficult legislative sessions our union has ever faced. At the start of the Legislative Session in January, every TSEU priority was under attack: pay, pensions, health care, state services, and our union’s very right to exist and to have a voice.

In the midst of some of the greatest attacks TSEU ever faced, union members refused to relent to pressure from opposing legislators and the extreme interest groups who back them. Throughout the session, TSEU members generated countless phone calls into the state capitol, attended nearly 400 legislative visits and meetings, and sent over 2,100 pay raise post cards.

While the Legislature did take some actions that will negatively affect state employees, retirees, and the services we provide, the efforts of thousands of TSEU members produced some incredible victories that defied many experts’ predictions. The following is a summary of events relevant to TSEU that occurred in the 2015 legislative session.

Legislators from both political parties expressed concerns over using the surplus revenue for tax cuts, while many state programs and services remained underfunded. However, these voices were out-voted by the majority of lawmakers from both chambers, who agreed on a \$3.8 billion tax cut package as one of the

## Throughout the session, TSEU members were taking the fight to the Capitol

TSEU members were present in the capitol every day of the legislative session- testifying in hearings and meeting with legislators and their staff. Thousands of members made their voices heard by calling their legislators or sending a pay raise postcard. In total, TSEU members collected and mailed close to 2,200 pay raise postcards to legislators, generated hundreds of phone calls, testified during 29 legislative hearings, and had 394 meetings with legislators and/or staff during the 140 day session.

State employee and retiree union activists also made their presence felt in the capitol during TSEU’s Mini-Lobby Days. In addition to pushing for an across-the-board pay raise and secure benefits for all state workers and retirees, union members came to Austin to lobby their legislators on the key issues facing them and their particular sector, agency, or university.



### HUMAN SERVICES FEBRUARY 4

Yolanda Suffle-Bowler, Christina Vargas (El Paso), Leticia Quintanilla (Harlingen); Judy Lugo, Charles Shedd (Austin); Debra Rumsey (Lubbock); Douglas Cuba (Tyler); Cynthia Rice (Dallas); Patricia Deliganis (Laredo); Laura Kendrick (Bryan);

George Sheffield (Denton); Joan Barasch (San Antonio); Ilesa Daniels, Latausha Davis, Jennifer Garza, and Loreffa Uzoma (Houston)

#### Key issues discussed:

- stopping human services consolidation
- increasing contract oversight, stopping privatization of state services
- increasing staffing levels to reduce workloads

first measures adopted in the budget. In the end, the tax cuts included a small property tax cut and a 25% cut in the business franchise tax.

The majority of Texans will see little benefit from the tax plan which only allows for a \$126 per year tax break for the average homeowner. Texans who don't own a home or a business will see no tax cut at all.

Even worse, lawmakers left \$6.4 billion on the table in unspent state revenue. That's \$6.4 billion that could have been used for a real across-the-board pay raise for state workers, providing a cost-of-living increase for retirees, hiring more staff to reduce workloads, and to improve the quality of state services.

Lawmakers did fully fund employee pension and health care plans (more details below) and allocated funding for an additional 550 staff in the Family Protective Services. However, many critical needs for state employees and state services remained unmet. The take away from this session's budget is that even in the midst of economic prosperity, the Texas Legislature chose not to put state employee salaries on par with the rising cost of living and did not fund public services, education, and infrastructure at a level that meets the needs of our state's growing population.



## Pay Raises

**W**inning an across-the-board pay raise was a top priority for TSEU members this session. Unfortunately, most state employees will see no real pay increase. This is because even though lawmakers provided a 2.5% across-the-board salary increase for state agency employees, the raise was part of a larger plan to increase funding for the ERS pension plan (see Pensions section below). The 2.5% pay increase will be offset by the increase in the employee contribution into the ERS pension fund, which is scheduled to go up to 9.5% on September 1st, 2015. All of the 2.5% pay increase will be eaten up by the pension contribution increase, leaving state employee pay stagnant. University employees were once again excluded from the across-the-board pay increase. TSEU activists at state universities will be organizing and mobilizing to win a flat-amount, across-the-board pay increase for university employees.

Parole Officers in TDCJ will receive an 8% salary increase, while Juvenile Correctional Officers in TJJD will receive a 5% increase (2.5% in 2016 and 2.5% in 2017), all on top of the 2.5% across-the-board raise.

The budget also mandates that HHSC allocate \$6.6million for pay raises to Registered Nurses and Licensed Vocation Nurses in SSLCs and State Hospitals who work in "high turnover" locations. No additional information was included in the budget that tells which specific locations will receive a pay raise and how much the pay raise will be. TSEU will be working to find out more details on this.

TSEU's long-held position is that all state and university employees need an across-the-board pay raise that meets the rising costs of living. We will continue organizing and mobilizing from now, through the elections in 2016, and into the 2017 Legislative session to win a real across-the-board pay raise.



### UNIVERSITIES | FEBRUARY 11

*Selfa Chew (UTEP); Joseph Davis (UH); Will Wise, Anne Lewis, Aryn Glazier, Judy Holloway, Kathryn Kenefick (UT Austin); Elias Cantu (UTSWMC); and Jeanine Hanohano (UTMDACC), Karen Charleston (PV A&M)*

**Key issues discussed:**

- Stopping public university privatization
- Reregulating university tuition rates
- Increasing funding

### FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES FEBRUARY 18

*Sonia Samples, Jim Funk, Annette Ramos (San Antonio); Michelle Copeland, Christie Fleming (Houston)*

**Key issues discussed:**

- implementing caseload standards to reduce caseloads and turnover rates
  - stopping privatization attempts like the Foster Care Redesign



*January 13* To mark the opening day of the 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature, TSEU members, friends, family and allies brave freezing temperatures to rally in support of state workers! This has become a regular TSEU event and gets bigger every legislative session!

**'Mini Lobby Day' coverage continues on the next page** ➔



## Pensions - VICTORY!

The Texas Legislature passed the House plan to restore the ERS fund back to financial stability. Going into the 2015 Legislative Session, the Employee Retirement System (ERS) pension fund had \$7.5 billion unfunded liability which was the result of underfunding from the Texas Legislature over the past two decades, coupled with a declining state employee workforce. To solve this problem, some lawmakers were asking state employees to put “more skin in the game” by cutting benefits and increasing costs. State employees had already endured cost increases and benefit cuts in both 2009 and 2013.

TSEU members rallied around the state, through phone call mobilizations and numerous public testimonies at the Capitol, to push for full funding of our pension plan without any cost increases or benefit cuts.



On March 10<sup>th</sup>, after significant pressure from TSEU members and allies, leaders of the House Appropriations and Pensions Committees laid out their plan to put the ERS pension fund on a path to sustainability. Among them was TSEU ally Representative Sylvester Turner (D-Houston) who strongly pushed for no cuts to benefits or pay.

The House proposal called for:

- increasing the state’s contribution to 9.5% of employee pay (currently at 7.5%)
- increasing the employee’s contribution to 9.5% of pay (currently at 6.9%) in September 2015
- maintaining the agency contribution at .5% of employee pay
- providing a 2.5% across-the-board pay raise for all state employees to offset the increased contribution

After the release of the House pension proposal, the Senate began the work of producing a counter proposal that was likely to include benefit and pay cuts. TSEU members again mobilized to call on Senators to accept the House’s plan to fully fund the pension with no cuts. The Senate never publicly released their pension proposal and eventually accepted the House proposal through the passage of HB 9 by Representative Dan Flynn (R -Van).



This victory puts the ERS pension fund on a path to financial stability without any benefit cuts or net pay cuts, making the fund actuarially sound by the 2017 Legislative Session. This also puts TSEU in a better position to win a long overdue cost-of-living increase for current retirees during the next legislative session. In order for the 91,000 state agency retirees in ERS to receive a COLA, the fund must be 100% actuarially sound. ERS retirees have not received an increase in their pension annuities since 2001.

The Teacher Retirement System (TRS) pension fund remains actuarially sound. However, legislation that would have provided a COLA for current TRS retirees failed to pass. Winning a COLA for all retirees and getting a real pay raise for active employees will be a top priority in the next session.

## SSLC'S/STATE HOSPITALS | FEBRUARY 25

Luticia Armstead, Kirston Pounds (Brenham SSLC); Marina Galvan (San Angelo SSLC); William Wills (Richmond SSLC); Diana Ramirez, Francisca Gonzalez, Rose Soto, Carmen Duron (Corpus Christi SSLC); Stacy Offord (Austin SSLC); David Veith (San Antonio SSLC); Yolanda White, Ninfa Rodriguez (Lufkin SSLC); Jim Branson (Austin); Dwight Gentry (Terrell State Hospital); Elias O’Neal, Tim Robinson (Mexia SSLC); Bobbie Walker, Robbie Walker, Patricia Raven (Lubbock SSLC); Paul Eisenhauer, Arthur Valdez (San Antonio State Hosp.); Francisco Santillan (Denton SSLC); Jim Pearson, Amy Mashberg (Austin State Hospital)

### Key issues discussed:

- Stopping privatization of any State Hospital or closures of any SSLC’s
- Creating a job classification for peer support specialists
- Providing hazardous/high risky duty pay for SSLC and State Hospital direct care staff



## TJJD | MARCH 4

Demetrius Waples, Cora Bennett (Mart)

### Key issues discussed:

- stopping closures of any TJJD facilities
- transitioning TJJD to a system of state-run, smaller facilities
- including JCO’s and Case Managers in the LECOSRF 20-year Retirement Plan



## TDCJ PAROLE | MARCH 11

Micah Haley (Dallas); James Nauls, Gloria Bynum, Sonja Walker, Gail Henderson, Charles Williams, Samm Almaguer (Houston); Edward Moreno, Minnie Carrillo (Lubbock); Jamie Frias, Buffy Balderas (San Antonio); Allen Mitchell (Ft Worth)

### Key issues discussed:

- increasing staffing levels to reduce caseloads for Parole officers
- including all clerical/support staff in pay raises

## Health Care Benefits

The legislature fully funded health care benefits for both state agency and university employees in the ERS Group Benefit Plan, along with the University of Texas and the Texas A&M health care plans. However, the Legislature passed the Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) bill HB 966 by Rep. Myra Crownover (R-Denton). HB 966 only applies to state employees and retirees in the ERS Group Benefit Plan.

Health Savings Accounts are alternative health plans that deter employees from utilizing regular health services through very high deductibles attached with a limited fund account for health care needs. These health plans place more financial burden on those who have a higher need for health care, such as the elderly, women, and the chronically ill. Providing these plans as an option will also mislead younger and healthier employees into choosing a health plan that would be more expensive to them later in life. And when younger, healthier employees opt into an HSA, costs go up

for those who choose to keep their traditional health care plan. Previous experiments with HSAs and high deductible plans have failed within the Texas A&M system and in other states, as well.

TSEU had been successful in defeating Health Savings Accounts for the five previous legislative sessions. The bill was passed, despite TSEU members putting up a hard fight to stop it by making phone calls, testifying at public hearings, and working with allied legislators to speak out against the bill on the House floor. Because of our strong resistance, we were able to pass amendments into HB 966 that provide a level of protection to ensure the sustainability of the traditional health plan.

A number of legislators worked closely with TSEU and fought with us against HSAs. They include Rep. Ron Reynolds (D- Missouri City), Rep. Sylvester Turner (D- Houston), Rep. Eddie Rodriguez (D- Austin) Rep. Mary Gonzalez (D-El Paso), Rep. Helen Giddings (D-Dallas), Rep. Eddie Lucio III (D-Brownsville), and Sen. Jose Menendez (D-San Antonio).

## Defeating closures of State Supported Living Centers VICTORY!

Senate Bill 204 filed by Sen. Juan Hinojosa (D- South Texas), the DADS Sunset bill, called for the closure of the Austin State Supported Living Center (SSLC) and setting up a commission to consolidate and to close other facilities. SB 204 died after House and Senate conferees failed to reach an agreement to reconcile the versions of the bill passed by each. The bill had been a product of recommendations proposed by the Texas Sunset Commission one year ago.

TSEU, the Family and Guardian Association of Austin SSLC, and PART (a statewide advocacy organization for SSLC residents and their families) launched a year-long campaign to stop the closure of any SSLC. The system of 11 SSLCs around the state are home to thousands of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are often very medically fragile. Members across the state made phone calls and legislative visits, sent postcards, testified at committee hearings and walked the floors of the Capitol with family and guardians until we won.

The Senate passed SB 204 in its original form but, due to persistent mobilizing from TSEU members and Guardian activists, the House overwhelmingly approved amendments stripping out the language that called for the closures of SSLCs.

... continued, next page



### MORE INFORMATION COMING SOON . . .

TSEU will provide information to educate state workers and retirees on the impact of HSAs (Health Savings Accounts) while encouraging them not to opt into these alternative plans. TSEU members are prepared to come back in the next legislative session and fight to get HSAs eliminated.



### RETIREES | MARCH 25

Edna Wiley, Cecilia Collier (Fort Worth); Susan Bradley, Steve Bradley, Vicki Clark-Bradley, Garry McVea, Diane Herring, Stephanie Young, Leroy Haverlah, Philip Mullins, Yolanda Delgado, Danny Fetonte, Janie Aguilar, Hank Leithner, Tom Herrera (Austin); Elaine Blodgett (Bastrop); Gracia Cooley, Frances Morrow (Corpus Christi); Harold Dillashaw, Linda Wilson, Mary Esther

Escobedo, Darwin Paul Tucke, Neifa Nacel-Dovalina (San Antonio); Jerry Wald, Rosalinda Egge, Pamela Baker, James Nauls (Houston); Mike Torres (Lubbock); Philip Lynch (Denton); Linda Hernandez (Arlington); Tina Belmares (Alamo); Janie Peña, Joe Angulo (McAllen); Paula Everett, Anitra Patterson (Dallas); Debra Coleman (Somerville);

### Key issues discussed:

- fully funding both ERS and TRS retirement systems
- stopping the introduction of Health Savings Accounts
- the need for a cost-of-living increase in the monthly annuity for all ERS and TRS retirees



This is a huge victory for TSEU and its allies who worked together to defeat this attempt to close SSLCs. Many believed the closures were a certainty when the DADS Sunset Committee announced the proposal more than a year ago.

Several key legislators fought to make sure the State Supported Living Centers were not closed. Representatives Susan King (R-Abilene), Paul Workman (R-Austin) and Trey Martinez Fischer (D-San Antonio) did much of the heavy lifting in the House to get amendments attached to stop the closures with overwhelming support. Senator Kirk Watson (D-Austin) worked to get a similar amendment attached to the bill in the Senate but could not get enough support. As we celebrate this victory for state employees, the loved ones of the SSLC residents and the individuals who depend upon these crucial services, we must keep in mind that there will be future closure attempts and that there is still work to be done to improve the quality of care and the infrastructure at SSLCs.

### Stopping the Privatization of Terrell State Hospital VICTORY!

TSEU was successful in stopping the privatization of Terrell State Hospital. After unethical contracting practices came to light within the Health and Human Services Commission, the agency announced that “no further action” will be taken on the request for proposal and the tentative contract award that had been announced late last year. That contract award would have given control of the Terrell State Hospital to private prison corporation GEO Care and its subsidiary, Correct Care Solutions.

This victory would not have happened without TSEU and our allies fighting back. Since the first announcement of HHSC’s plans to privatize the hospital, union members across the state have



TSEU members, family groups and others rally outside the Austin State Supported Living Center. Throughout the legislative session, a number of events were held in support of the center, its employees, and the residents.



mobilized phone calls and meetings with legislators, dozens of members turned out for town hall meetings in Terrell to voice their opposition, and we helped bring together a coalition of community leaders in Terrell, patient advocacy groups, and state employees.

The agency’s announcement to scrap the plan to privatize Terrell followed a scathing report released by the State Auditor’s Office denouncing the flawed effort to seek that proposed contract. The audit said HHSC did not ensure the “best value to the state” when it tentatively decided to hire Correct Care Solutions to run the hospital. Among the problems identified, the commission didn’t conduct the proper assessment to justify hiring a private operator, the value of the contract was vastly underestimated and the system didn’t thoroughly vet the private health-care provider, instead relying solely on the provider’s own information.

On top of canceling the contract proposal, a rider was included in the State Budget that prohibits HHSC from using any of its funding to solicit a contract bid that would privatize any of the existing State Hospitals for the next biennium.

### HHSC Consolidation

Senate Bill 200, filed by Sen. Jane Nelson (R-Flower Mound), was based on recommendations from the Sunset Commission to abolish all five Human Services agencies and consolidate them into a single mega-agency. Consolidation of the human services agencies would hurt the specialized functions of the different agencies, from investigating child abuse to providing health services to people with disabilities, and hundreds of other services and programs that Texans rely upon.

SB 200, in its original form, would also transfer significant authority to the executive commissioner, with little chance for legislators and public citizens to weigh in and provide oversight on important decisions such as privatization of services.

Supporters of consolidation touted the plans as a way to cut agency budgets by streamlining services and reducing the number of state employees. Senator Don Huffines (R-Dallas) was quoted as saying:

*“The real cost savings will be achieved through reducing the number of state employees... taxpayers are liable not only for the salaries for the tens of thousands of employees, but also for their benefits.”*

... HHSC consolidation, continued

A few weeks after SB 200 was filed, Gov. Gregg Abbott released his "Strike Force" report which emphasized that the creation of a mega-agency would create a new series of inefficiencies.

*A "single large bureaucracy may make HHS programs even less accessible and efficient than the current structure, even with its flaws...Full consolidation would create enormous potential problems with span of control and oversight for the executive commissioner."*

In response to the Governor's "Strike Force" Report, the Senate adopted amendments to SB 200 that delay the consolidation of FPS and DSHS and to allow for more public input via public hearings throughout the transition process. HHSC, DADS, and DARS will be combined no later than September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 and FPS and DSHS will be combined after a transition study is completed that lays out a timeline for them. TSEU members consistently spoke out in hearings against this plan and will be closely involved as the transitions begin to take place.

## **Payroll Deduction Fight VICTORY!**

Throughout the Legislative Session, anti-union interest groups aggressively pushed a series of bills that would eliminate the rights of public employees to contribute to a union or employee association through their paychecks. This was a direct attack on state employees' and retirees right to have a voice over issues that matter to us.

A total of three bills were filed to eliminate payroll deduction. The first bill was HB 1749 filed in late February by Rep. Gary Elkins (R-Houston). Freshman

Senator Bob Hall (R-Dallas) filed the second version of payroll deduction bill, SB 1157. Due to pressure from TSEU and other public sector unions, HB 1749 and SB 1157 never gained momentum and the bills died in committee.

On March 13<sup>th</sup>, the deadline for filing bills in the legislature, Senator Joan Huffman who is chairwoman of the powerful Senate State Affairs Committee, filed the third and final version of the payroll deduction bill, SB 1968. Unlike previous versions of the dues deduction bills, SB 1968 excluded police, fire fighters, and emergency response employees from losing payroll deduction. This blatant divide and conquer strategy proved to be ineffective as multiple police and firefighter unions fought in solidarity with TSEU against this bill.

On April 9<sup>th</sup>, the day after TSEU's Lobby Day, the Senate State Affairs Committee held a hearing on SB 1968. TSEU and members from allied unions testified, citing financial security and economic freedom as key reasons for opposing the bill. SB 1968 was voted out of committee and passed through the Senate, along party lines.

When SB 1968 was sent to the House, the bill was referred to the House State Affairs Committee Chaired by Rep. Byron Cook (R-Corsicana). Chairman Byron Cook scheduled a public hearing for SB 1968 on May 21<sup>st</sup> at 8AM. Nearly 250 union members from TSEU, teachers unions, police and firefighter unions, and the correctional employees union, along with members from various private sector unions, drove into Austin to testify against the bill. At the beginning of the hearing, Chairman Cook announced that he was going to end public testimony at 10AM. With only two hours allowed for union members to testify, just a small fraction of 250 union members would have the opportunity to testify against the bill - many of these activists drove through the night to Austin after working a full shift on the job.

Only two witnesses testified in support of ending payroll deductions, but their feeble arguments and inaccurate statements were drowned out by dozens of union members who gave rousing testimonies that reflected our commitment to public service, our determination to

have a voice for ourselves and the citizens we serve, while displaying the power of solidarity within the labor movement as a whole. TSEU President Judy Lugo and activist Carmen Duron (Corpus Christi SSLC) were able to testify, putting the face of frontline state employees on this issue. The testimony and presence of so many TSEU members generated a positive response from the members of the House State Affairs Committee.

Immediately after public testimony, union members headed to the front of the House of Representatives to express their disappointment that everyone was not given the opportunity to testify. Some members of the State Affairs Committee came off the House floor to address members personally. After an hour of rallying in front of the House floor, union members dispersed.

For the next few days, hundreds of union members continued to make calls into the House State Affairs Committee until Chairman Byron Cook publicly announced that he would not take a vote on the bill and SB 1968 would die in committee.

There was a last ditch effort by the union busters to eliminate payroll deduction through an amendment to the campaign finance ethics bill SB 19. Their tactic failed and unions officially defeated all efforts to ban payroll deduction. This is a tremendous victory for TSEU and the Texas Labor Movement but we can be sure that attempts to eliminate dues deduction will resurface in the 2017 Legislative Session.



A LOOK BACK AT:

# TSEU LOBBY DAY 2015

## ORGANIZING, MOBILIZING, AND POLITICAL ACTION *all rolled into ONE day!*

**H**undreds of union members, family and supporters marched, rallied, and met with legislators on Wednesday, April 8<sup>th</sup> for TSEU's State Employee Lobby Day 2015. After a noisy march and rally, teams of union members headed into the Capitol to ask for support for better pay and benefits, and quality state services. Teams completed over 120 visits with legislators or their staff. It was a long day for everybody involved, but well worth it. Decision makers need to hear from the people who make the state of Texas work! If you work with or know somebody who went, thank them for their time and effort - AND PLAN TO JOIN US ON THE BUS IN 2017!







## A SNAP-SHOT OF:

# THE 84<sup>TH</sup> TEXAS LEGISLATURE

### SUMMARY OF TSEU WINS:

- Full funding of the ERS pension without benefit and net pay cuts
- 8% pay raises for Parole Officers
- 5% pay raises for Juvenile Correctional Officers
- Passage of state hospital privatization ban
- Full funding for ERS and university health care
- Addition of 550 staff in Family Protective Services
- Stopped privatization of Terrell State Hospital

### PASSED:

- **HB 786 Armando Walle (D-Houston)/ Judith Zaffrini (D-South Central Texas)** provides breastfeeding accommodation for state employees on the job.
- **HB 903 Giovanni Capriglione (R-Southlake) / Van Taylor (R-Plano)** investment of the Rainy Day Fund for increased state revenue
- **HB 9 Dan Flynn (R-Van)** increased state contribution to ERS
- **SB 239 Charles Schwertner (R-Round Rock)** provides student loan repayment assistance for mental health professionals in DSHS, TJJD and TDCJ
- **HB 2372 Harold Dutton (D-Houston)** Juvenile Correctional Officers supervised training reduced to 240 hours

### DEFEATED:

- **SB 204 by Juan Hinojosa (D-South Texas)** State Supported Living Center closures
- **SB 1968 Joan Huffman (R-Houston)** elimination of payroll deduction
- **SB 1151, 1153, 1157 Bob Hall (R-Dallas)** elimination of payroll deduction, Open Records Request ban, meet and confer to allow for union negotiations.
- **HB 2836 Susan King (R-Abilene) and SB 1613 Don Huffines (R-Dallas)** elimination of state employee longevity pay
- **SB 778 Kel Seliger (R-Amarillo)** performance-based tuition increase bill
- **HB 2966 Scott Sanford (R-McKinney)** interim study of what HHSC functions can be privatized
- **HB 3890 Phil Stephenson (R-Wharton)** prohibits benefits for same-sex spouses of ERS or TRS members



In the last legislative session, victories not only came in the form of what we WON but also what we were able to KEEP. State workers and the services we provide were under constant attack throughout the session. Our victories, as well as our defeats, only further reflect the need for a strong, unified voice for state workers at the capitol. Get involved today and help turn the losses into WINS!

### SUMMARY OF TSEU LOSSES

- No real, across-the-board raise

### PASSED

- **SB 200 Jane Nelson (R-Flower Mound)** HHSC consolidation
- **HB 966 Myra Crownover (R-Denton) / Kelly Hancock (R-McKinney)** Health Savings Accounts, mandate not to split the risk pool

### DEFEATED

- **HB 2631 Toni Rose (D-Dallas)** hazardous duty pay for SH and SSLC's
- **HB 1821 Roberto Alonzo (D-Dallas)** inclusion of Juvenile Correctional Officers in the supplemental retirement plan LECOSRF
- **HB 45 Armando Martinez (D-Welaso)** Cost of Living Adjustment for TRS retirees
- **HB 793/HB 921/SB 223 Mary Gonzalez (D-El Paso), Charles Schwertner (R-Austin), Four Price (R-Amarillo),** tuition reregulation bills
- **HB 701 Alma Allen (D-Houston)** COLA for ERS retirees
- **HB 881 Dawna Dukes (D-Austin)** HHSC contract oversight
- **HB 993 Armando Walle (D-Houston)** FPS caseloads bill
- **HB 1541 Cindy Burkett (R-Mesquite)** peer specialist and peer support services in State Hospitals
- **HB 3573 Roberto Alonzo (D-Dallas)** added a retiree seat to the ERS Board of Trustees
- **SB 358 Royce West (D-Dallas)** student loan repayment assistance for FPS Investigators and FBSS Caseworkers

# TWO steps to make TSEU unbustable!



In the last legislative session, anti-state services lawmakers pushed a bill that was designed to destroy public employee unions in Texas, and by doing so, silence state workers and retirees. Senate Bill 1968 would have banned our union from collecting membership dues through automatic payroll deduction. They nearly won, but TSEU members across Texas mobilized and organized to stop the attack for now.

**WE KNOW THEY'LL BE BACK** - This attack on the right of state workers and retirees to have a voice was launched by corporate and anti-state services interests like the Koch brothers, the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), and the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB). These groups are trying to destroy public employee unions because

organizations of state workers like TSEU have been successful in stopping their agenda.

**And what is it they hope to achieve by weakening TSEU and silencing state workers and retirees?** •Privatization of state services •Conversion of ERS and TRS to 401(k) style defined contribution plans •Defunding of programs and services like Medicaid, unemployment benefits, and higher education. For more than 35 years, TSEU members have been on the front lines, pushing back against these attacks, and now, they're coming after us directly by trying to bust our union.

## WE WON'T LET THEM SILENCE US! TSEU members are fighting back by taking two key steps:

- Joining COPE, TSEU's political action fund. : Authorizing bank draft dues.
- TSEU can't use dues funds for direct political work. State workers and retirees must have the political muscle to elect lawmakers who will vote FOR state services and state employees instead of against us. : We know bills like SB1968 will be back, and may pass. We must make TSEU unbreakable by preparing to switch our membership dues over to bank draft collection in the event payroll deduction is not an option for membership.



## The Committee on Political Education

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

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ SOCIALSECURITY# \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
STREET / PO BOX CITY ZIP

HOME PHONE ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ WORKPHONE( ) \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_ AGENCY/ORGANIZATION \_\_\_\_\_

**IN ORDER TO PROCESS YOUR APPLICATION, YOU MUST INCLUDE A VOIDED CHECK**

BANK NAME \_\_\_\_\_ BANKADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

ROUTING # \_\_\_\_\_ ACCOUNT# \_\_\_\_\_

DRAFT FROM (CHECK ONE) [ ] CHECKING [ ] SAVINGS DRAFT BEGINS MONTH OF \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_

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

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 above, in the same monthly dues amount as then on file with TSEU. (initial box at right)

INITIAL

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.

TSEU VICTORY!

# ERS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

## Ilesa Daniels wins seat on ERS Board

**O**n May 6, the Employees Retirement System (ERS) announced that Ilesa Daniels, TSEU activist and HHSC employee with over 24 years of service, won the election to serve on the Board of Trustees. Ms. Daniels won by only 41 votes out of the 30,000 votes that were cast.

This September, she will begin her 6-year term on the Board, stepping into the seat vacated by long-time TSEU activist and ERS Board member Yoly Griego, who did not run for reelection this year and endorsed Daniels to replace her. Griego leaves behind a strong legacy of standing up for state workers and retirees, and pushing back against cost increases and benefit cuts to our pensions and health care.

*"The credit for this victory goes to all the TSEU members and activists who worked to get the word out about the election and asked their coworkers and fellow retirees to vote for me. I pledge to be the voice for frontline state employees and retirees on the Board. I will work to protect our hard-earned benefits from those who want to see them cut."*

**Ilesa Daniels on her ERS election victory**



*Ilesa Daniels shows state worker pride as she marches at Lobby Day.*



*Throughout the campaign, TSEU members helped spread the word at their office and within their agencies about the election and TSEU's candidate, Ilesa Daniels. We have many more #ILES4ERS pictures posted on our facebook page*



AUSTIN TX 78704-9965  
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TEXAS STATE EMPLOYEES UNION/CWA

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# TEXAS STATE EMPLOYEES UNION / CWA

1700 South 1<sup>st</sup> 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	
<b>Membership dues and effective date of payroll deduction: the 1<sup>st</sup> day of _____, 20__</b> <span style="float: right;">(MONTH)</span>	
<input type="checkbox"/> \$16 - salary below \$20,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$19 - salary \$20,000 - \$25,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$22 - salary \$25,000 - \$30,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 - salary over \$30,000 <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER \$ _____	
<b>AUTHORIZATION:</b> 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.	

MEMBERS IN ACTION

THE STATEWIDE ROUNDUP

# TSEU Executive Board members sworn in

[BELOW L-R] *Arthur Valdez, Anne Lewis, Anthony Brown, Joanne Day, Judy Lugo, Samm Almaguer, Micah Haley, Seth Hutchinson, Joe Angulo, Yolanda White, Debra Coleman, and Yvette Sherman*



**T**SEU Executive Board members elected last Fall were sworn in during the January 31<sup>st</sup>, joint staff/e-board meeting. TSEU Executive Board members are elected by TSEU members to three-year terms. The executive board oversees the implementation of our union's organizing and political programs and provides financial oversight.

TSEU's newest Executive board (seen at left, taking their oath of office) is comprised of long-time activists, committed to moving TSEU forward during these difficult times for union members AND for state workers and looks forward to the challenges ahead. On behalf of the membership, TSEU extends its congratulations to these upstanding union members!



## Organizing Highlights

**GIDDINGS TJJD** *In April, TSEU activist Mary Henry, seated with TSEU staff Robert Feria, helped sign up 11 new members into the union at a table at the facility, including April Moore, seen here.*



**BRENNHAM SSLC TSEU** *Executive Board member Debra Coleman (standing center) signs up Marilyn Flowers and Cheryl Lightfoot into TSEU and COPE. In all, ten new members joined the union that day!*



## Community Visibility

*TSEU coastal bend members wore TSEU shirts and carried a TSEU banner during Corpus Christi's Cesar Chavez day celebration this March. Seen here [L-R] Rose Soto (SSLC), Rickie Ehle (DADS), Yanira Rosales (DADS), a TSEU friend, and Andrea Roelofs (TSEU); not pictured, David Dow (TJJD).*



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## Organizing Committees

[LEFT] *The San Antonio Organizing Committee has formed to grow the union in the San Antonio area, to mobilize and win on our issues, and to discuss the major issues facing state workers in the area. Pictured here are Gail Abron, Kenneth Stevens, Dolores Sandoval, Ana Rivera (TWC), Linda Wilson (ROC), Arthur Valdez (SASH), and David Veith (SASSLC) as they go over charts and lists of organizing targets in their office.*



[RIGHT] *The Houston Area Human Services and FPS Organizing Committees celebrated Ilesa Daniels election victory after their meetings in the Houston office. The committees meet on Saturday mornings to discuss developments in the respective agencies, to review goals, and to make organizing plans at their offices. Seen here: [l-r] Latusha Davis (HHSC), Amy Zachmeyer (FPS), Ilesa Daniels (HHSC), Christie Carrington (FPS), Jennifer Garza (HHSC), Pat Johnson (FPS), Vanessa Brown (FPS). Not Pictured - Anthony Brown (DADS)*

## TSEU Social Media Campaigns



*This year, starting with our ERS campaign to elect Ilesa Daniels (see page 11), TSEU members have been active on our social media 'message board' campaigns. Prior to the end of the legislative session, members held signs to remind others about state employee issues including pay, health care and more. Our current campaign helps to shine a light on ways to keep TSEU unbustable (see page 10). Contact your TSEU office or organizer or go to the TSEU Facebook page: [facebook.com/CWA.TSEU](https://www.facebook.com/CWA.TSEU) for more information or to upload your own photo!*



## Follow TSEU on Facebook!



As our ever-changing world becomes increasingly more dependent on social media to keep up, we realize the beneficial role it can play in connecting TSEU. Not only a way to see and post pictures of fellow members, it's also a way to get the word out about urgent actions or upcoming union events and to share important news in timely manner; BUT, it only works if YOU are part of it! Link to our Facebook page from the icon on the TSEU website or go to [facebook.com/CWA.TSEU](https://www.facebook.com/CWA.TSEU) and LIKE us today!

### TSEU EXECUTIVE BOARD

- **Judy Lugo** (HHSC, El Paso) President
- **Seth Hutchinson** (TSEU Austin) Vice President
- **Joanne Day** (DSHS, Austin) Secretary
- **Anthony Brown** (DADS, Houston) Treasurer
- **Joe Angulo** (UTPA-Retired, Edinburg) Region 1
- **Arthur Valdez** (DSHS, San Antonio) Region 2
- **Yvette Sherman** (FPS San Angelo) Region 3
- **Micah Haley** (TDCJ, Dallas) Region 4
- **Yolanda White** (DADS, Lufkin) Region 5
- **Debra Coleman** (DADS/Brenham) Region 6
- **Samm Almaguer** (TWC, Houston) Region 7
- **Anne Lewis** (UT-Austin) Region 8

### TSEU STAFF AND OFFICES

**AUSTIN 512.448-4225**  
**1700 South 1st Street**  
**Austin, TX 78704**

- Seth Hutchinson, Organizing Coordinator
- Ron Day, Organizer
- Manuel Ramirez, Organizer
- Sara Castle, Organizer
- John Pena, Organizer
- Robert Feria, Organizer
- Harrison Hiner, Legislative Director
- Debbie Haun, Office Manager
- John Behr, IT
- Rachel Telles, Membership Office
- Chris Knapp, Publications

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- Arthur Valdez, Organizer
- Linda Wilson, Organizer
- Gabriel Morales, Organizer
- Andrea Roelofs, Organizer

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- Myko Gedutis, Asst. Organizing Coordinator
- Mark Gurrola, Organizer
- Cheryl Sanders, Organizer

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- Joe Montemayor, Lead Organizer
- Anitra Patterson, Organizer
- Keith Stenson, Organizer
- Celia Morgan, Organizer

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- Missy Benavidez, Organizer
- Gabriel Morales, Organizer

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**Lubbock, TX 79405**

- Joe Montemayor, Lead Organizer
- Santos Hernandez, Organizer
- Manuel Ramirez, Organizer

# TEXAS STATE EMPLOYEES UNION

Communications Workers of America, Local 6186



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when they tried to shut down SSLC's **TSEU WAS THERE**  
when they said we couldn't save our pensions **TSEU WAS THERE**  
when they attempted to bust our union **TSEU WAS THERE**

## MEMBERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

In the last legislative session, TSEU members made calls, visited legislators at the capitol, sent in postcards, and educated their co-workers. Organizing and mobilizing SAVED state employee pensions and kept State Supported Living Centers from being closed.

While members accomplished much during the session, legislators failed to act on other important issues for state employees and retirees.

Get active in your union!  
The stronger our voice,  
the bigger our victories!

Membership form inside -  
SIGN UP A NEW MEMBER  
OR JOIN TSEU TODAY!

[www.cwa-tseu.org](http://www.cwa-tseu.org)

