



# TEXAS STATE EMPLOYEES UNION UPDATE



VOL. 41/NO. 2

COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA, LOCAL 6186 / AFL-CIO

JULY 2022



## BUILDING OUR UNION



## BUILDING OUR VOICE



## ORGANIZING MAKES US STRONGER

[WWW.CWA-TSEU.ORG](http://WWW.CWA-TSEU.ORG)



# A MESSAGE FROM TSEU PRESIDENT JUDY LUGO

## Greetings TSEU Sisters and Brothers,

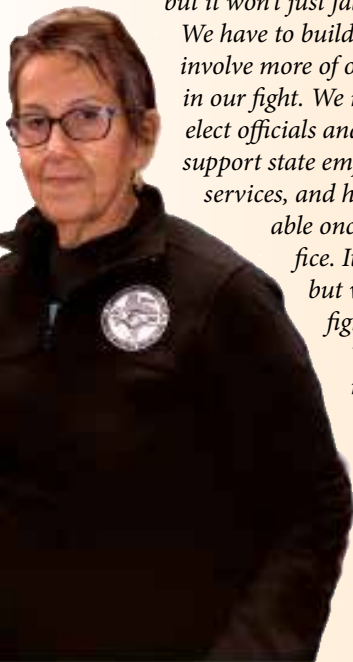
As you are likely very aware, these are very challenging times for state employees and retirees, and the communities we serve. Our budgets are stretched even thinner due to the rising costs of groceries, gas, and almost everything else. Stagnant pay and increasing workloads are causing many of our colleagues to leave state employment for better pay and safer working conditions. Retirees are being forced back into the workforce instead of enjoying retirement at their own pace.

As this latest Update goes to print, our hearts are heavy with the latest horrific attacks on innocent lives, both in our own communities and far from Texas. From Uvalde, to Buffalo, El Paso, Santa Fe, and Sutherland Springs, we are all too familiar with the anger, grief, and inaction that follow these violent attacks. Accepting these tragedies as unavoidable or ignoring the facts that form a clear pattern linking powerful weapons of war to mass casualties ensures that we will be left reeling again and again.

The agencies and universities where we work are also under increased pressure to do more with less. State leaders have chosen to keep our pay and pension stagnant while the state's coffers swell with upwards of \$25 billion. Elected officials have chosen to undermine state services and have pushed for privatization to line the pockets of well connected contractors. Elected officials like Gov. Abbott have chosen to use state agencies and state employees as political cudgels to target vulnerable communities, just to build their resume for the next election.

Despite the obstacles we face, we as TSEU members and our communities as a whole, must continue to organize and mobilize. A better Texas is possible- but it won't just fall from the sky.

We have to build our union and involve more of our coworkers in our fight. We need to work to elect officials and legislators that support state employees and state services, and hold them accountable once they get into office. It's not always easy, but we have to keep fighting for a better Texas. Organize, mobilize, and get involved!



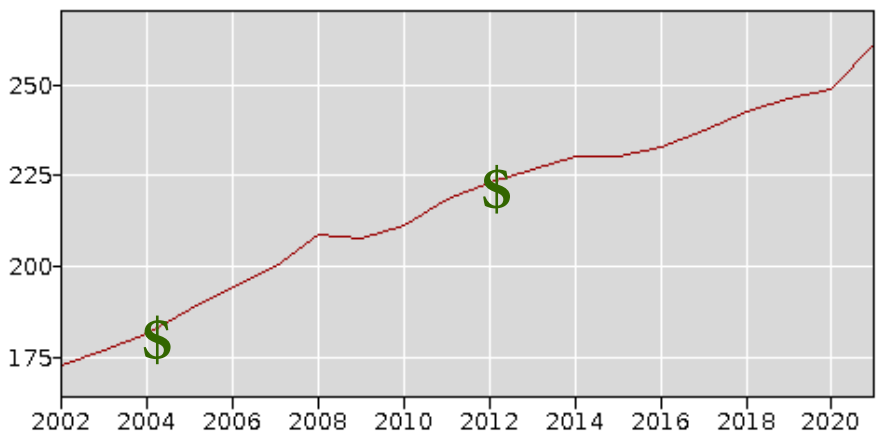
## Making Our Pay and Pensions a **PRIORITY**



Our stagnant pay and pensions have been made even worse by the rising cost of living and record setting inflation. Even legislators - the group of people who are directly responsible for keeping our pay and pension benefits frozen for years - have begun to hold hearings in the Capitol about the impact of inflation on state employees and retirees.

HOW BAD IS IT?	Last Increase	Cost of living since last increase
ERS Retirees Annuity	2001	up 38%
State Employees Pay*	2012	up 21%

\* Last across the board pay raise. Targeted raises for specific job titles have been funded but fall short of addressing the needs of all employees.



The Cost-of-Living continues to rise. The last increases to state retirees annuity and state employee pay occurred in 2001 and 2012, respectively.

## The money is there- WE NEED OUR SHARE!

Unlike in previous legislative sessions when budget makers hid behind the 'budget shortfalls' that they had spawned themselves, currently Texas is sitting on BILLIONS of dollars in unspent revenue. In addition to the 'Rainy Day Fund' which is expected to grow to over \$12 Billion, Texas is sitting on another roughly \$12 Billion in unspent revenue and around \$3 Billion unspent federal COVID relief funds. An across the board \$6,000 raise and additional funding to allow ERS to provide the first pension increase in 20 years would only use a small fraction of the EXTRA billions of dollars that budget leaders have available.



Instead of tapping these funds to meet the needs of Texas communities, state employees, and retirees, state leaders have discussed using these funds to support a massive property tax cut to benefit the largest oil and gas producers.

## TSEU members across Texas are making our voices heard and we're pushing back!

We need quality state services provided by state employees that can afford to make ends meet- and we need a decent pension when we are ready to retire!

State employees and retirees are all too familiar with the hardships caused by stagnant pay and pension benefits. The impact is felt far beyond our own pocketbooks though. The important services we provide to our communities are even more frayed due to record high turnover rates. A true crisis exists in many agencies as remaining employees struggle with increased workloads, mandatory overtime, and additional shifts. This causes even more employees to leave in a vicious cycle.

Texans deserve better and so do state employees and retirees! We continued to serve the people of Texas and our communities – even during the Covid-19 pandemic - because the work we do is essential.

As employees who are committed to providing quality state services and retirees who have dedicated their careers to the state of Texas, we will continue to organize and mobilize for a real pay raise and pension increase. Legislators and elected officials will continue to ignore our needs and further cut Texas' essential services until we hold them accountable. Growing the power of our union by involving more of our coworkers, making our voice heard at the Capitol and in our communities, and electing legislators that support state services is how we will get there. Get involved, ask your coworkers to join, and together we can make a difference!

### How did we get here?

It's hard to turn on the news or read the paper without reading about a scandal involving State agencies or vulnerable Texans falling through our state's frayed social safety net. Between years of underfunding, privatization experiments, and high employee turnover rates, many of our agencies are not meeting the needs of the populations and communities we serve. Many Legislators will hypocritically assail 'Big Government' and cite failures to support further cuts or privatization. The fact is that budget decisions and policy directives from the state have destabilized both the state workforce and state agencies and universities.

It doesn't have to be this way. Systemic failures aren't inevitable. That's why we are organizing! The essential services we provide need to be priorities for elected officials - and they need to be held accountable when systemic failures turn into breaking headlines.

## THE BUDGET PROCESS

- **SUMMER 2022**  
State Agencies and Universities develop LARs, hold public hearings.
- **LATE SUMMER, FALL 2022**  
LARs for next Biennium submitted to LBB
- **WINTER 2022**  
LBB processes all LARs into initial recommendation
- **JANUARY 2023**  
LBB recommendations submitted to Legislature
- **JANUARY - MAY 2023**  
Budget is debated, hearings held in the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees
- **MAY 2023**  
Final Budget approved by Legislature for the next Biennium
- **SEPTEMBER 2023**  
New Biennium begins

### TERMS TO KNOW:

- **Legislative Budget Board - LBB**  
Permanent joint Legislative committee that develops budget and policy recommendations for legislative appropriations. Chaired by Gov. Abbott, Lt. Gov. Patrick, Sen. Huffman, Speaker Phalen and Rep. Bonnen.
- **LAR** - Legislative Appropriations Request
- **Biennium** - Two year budget cycle

## Abbott's political stunt on the border

Billions of dollars for privatization schemes and sending soldiers to guard wealthy private ranches - while gutting critical state services and bilking Texas taxpayers

### The Texas Military mobilized for . . . what, exactly?

After Governor Abbott ordered a massive expansion of Operation Lone Star (OLS) in September, soldiers spoke of terrible conditions, missing and irregular pay, and improper and inadequate equipment. Many troops were called up involuntarily to the border mission, which ballooned to 10,000 soldiers over two months. The Texas Military is mainly comprised of part-time soldiers who have civilian careers and families. If they are called by the federal government to deploy, they typically have 180 days to get their affairs in order. State mobilizations are normally for days at a time and for genuine public service, such as to respond

to hurricanes or other emergencies. The Texas Military troops called up to OLS often had just days to prepare and were expected to be mobilized on the border for a year - on a mission widely considered a purely political exploit to benefit the Governor's future political campaigns.

*continued, next page*



### *Abbott's political stunt on the border, continued. . .*

After the haste to get these troops to the border in days, under threat of arrest, soldiers often found that there was little to do. State employees are not authorized to apply immigration laws. Abbott told state workers to charge immigrants with trespass if they were apprehended on private property. Many Texas Military troops were sent to guard wealthy private ranches, often with politically connected owners, raising more questions about the use of the Texas Military in OLS.

Governor Abbott has trumpeted the so-called success of OLS, claiming over 13,000 criminal arrests and a high number of drug and weapons seizures. However, investigations by news sources found that many of these arrests had no connection to OLS and that trespassing was the charge in about 40% of the cases cited.

Concern is mounting that the Texas Military will not be able to retain troops in the service due to the OLS boondoggle, combined with a massive cut to tuition benefits in October, 2021 that was a major draw for Texas National Guard recruitment. The tuition cuts were effective retroactively, meaning that many soldiers were shocked to discover that the reimbursement they had counted on was not coming.

A Texas Military official told legislators that over 90% of service members who had participated in OLS volunteered to stay. However, with more questions, it came out that these high volunteer rates were only for about 750 members of the OLS mission that had previously volunteered to serve in March of 2021. Excluded were the rest of the soldiers - many of whom were involuntarily called up to service in OLS. The official did not have volunteer rates for troops that were involuntarily mobilized to OLS.

### **Ballooning cost, back-room deals**

The cost of Governor Abbott's Operation Lone Star (OLS) has blown up to over \$2 billion a year - well beyond the \$412 million allocated by the Texas Legislature for the Texas Military. And private companies are raking in millions of public dollars,

while Abbott's disaster order means that contracts can be handed out without a competitive bidding process that often takes weeks. There are often no formal contracts, and officials are spending millions at a time by merely filling out a purchase order. Moreover, the law gives the Governor authority to declare a disaster and continue to extend it in perpetuity, with no real oversight by other branches of government.

### **Shady budget transfers to cover costs - and undermine state services**

In January, 2022, five top Republican officials - Governor Abbott, with Legislative Budget Board (LBB) members Lt. Governor Dan Patrick, House Speaker Dade Phelan, Senate Finance Chair Joan Huffman and House Appropriations Chair Greg Bonnen - quietly transferred another \$480 million from three criminal justice agencies - Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Department of Public Safety, and Alcoholic Beverage Commission - to Operation Lone Star.

This move was approved behind closed doors, with no public scrutiny, and known only to a very small group of individuals. Months later, in April, Governor Abbott, Lt. Governor Patrick, Rep. Bonnen, and Sen. Huffman approved another transfer from state agencies to use for Gov. Abbott's Operation Lonestar. This funding transfer was \$495 million, taken from Health and Human Services, the Department of State Health Services, the Juvenile Justice Department, and the Department of Public Safety. In their letter to state agency heads, members of the LBB falsely stated that unspent funds would lapse at the end of the year and be unavailable to the agencies.

In reality, state agencies routinely transfer funds from one fiscal year to another. Members of the LBB know this because these transfers are approved through the LBB. These lies are part of the border boondoggle that is OLS - designed to excite the right-wing political base and line the pockets of private contractors with taxpayer money while upending the lives of thousands of Texas Military soldiers and undermining critical state services for which Texans rely.

## **TSEU San Antonio DFPS Leadership holds Town Hall Meeting on the CWOP crisis**

of over fifty TSEU members, DFPS workers, concerned citizens, legislative and city council staffers, and journalists. Union members Sabrina Bedford, Kasandra Link-Charles, Diane Deleon-Ruiz, Carol Saldana, and Christine Scott laid out the details of CWOP, how it was affecting the children and DFPS employees, and implored the public servants to treat CWOP like an emergency.

Moderator Sonia Samples, herself retired from DFPS, asked the elected officials to form a panel and pivoted to a discussion of solutions. The panel engaged in conversation and brainstorming with the crowd of concerned union members and citizens, pledging to continue working with TSEU members to nail down plans to improve the situation of foster Children Without Placement in San Antonio and keep up pressure on the state to urgently address the crisis.

San Antonio union members held a Town Hall Meeting on Saturday, April 2 to bring together local stakeholders in the crisis of foster Children Without Placement (CWOP). State, County, and City officials gathered to discuss what resources the community could bring to the table to effect changes immediately or in the very near-term - while using their public platforms to call for the Governor to take action to resolve the crisis that is having devastating consequences for children and DFPS employees across Texas.

Texas Senator Jose Menendez, State Representatives Ray Lopez and Liz Campos, County Judge candidate Peter Sakai, City Councilpersons Melissa Cabello Havrda and Phyllis Viagran, and Bexar County Judge Rosie Speedlin Gonzalez listened attentively in the audience



# THE R.O.C. REPORT

RETIREE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE



Fighting for our Pensions, Protecting our Health Care, Defending ERS

## TSEU-ROC members are making our voice heard!

✓ **For a pension increase:** In 2022-2023 TSEU will lead the way in a statewide push for a pension increase

As retirees, we used to believe our service to the state would end with a secure pension. However, legislative efforts to undermine our pensions have not stopped. It takes organized action by active employees and retirees to stand up to the attacks, protect what we have, and to win new improvements. Pensions for retirees in the Employees Retirement System of Texas have been frozen since 2001. Meanwhile, the cost of living has increased by almost 40%. Texas does NOT provide automatic cost of living adjustments (COLAs), for retired state employees. With the average pension at \$21,288 /yr, ERS retirees are struggling to make ends meet.

Retirees in the larger Teachers Retirement System received 13th checks in 2006, 2019 and 2021. The one-time checks were paid out of the state General Revenue, not the TRS fund itself. The average pension for TRS retirees is \$25,740/yr. Both ERS and TRS retirees need a pension increase ASAP.

### The primary issue: the need for additional state funding

The ERS and TRS needs to be fully funded and "actuarially sound" before paying out a permanent pension increase. The State must fully fund the ERS request for funds to make the pension fund actuarially sound and allocate additional funds to allow ERS retirees to receive a well-deserved and long overdue 13th check. The 2019 legislature added additional funding to TRS by gradually increasing contributions (State 8.25% plus a separate 2% employer portion, Employees 8.25%). The legislature then allocated an additional \$589 million to fund a bonus 13th check but not a pension increase. The Texas Legislature added new funding to the ERS pension fund in 2021, but not enough to allow a pension increase. TSEU ROC members, along with the thousands of active state employee members, will fight for funding for pension increase during the legislative session in 2023!

### A secure pension and a 13th check are both needed!

We need legislators to fund our pension systems so they meet the threshold to provide a long overdue permanent increase. In the meantime, there is no reason that a \$2500 bonus cannot be given to present retirees using funds coming from General Revenue. TSEU ROC activists have already begun working to win support for this at the Capitol, without letting up on the pressure for a real, permanent pension increase for ERS retirees.

### •Purchasing Power Decline - our frozen pensions buy less today



### •The money is there

	Amount per retiree	State Funding
TRS, 2019	Additional payment, Maximum \$2,000	\$589 million
TRS, 2021	Additional payment, Maximum \$2,400	\$701 million
<b>TSEU proposed ERS 2023</b>	<b>Across-the-board \$2500</b>	<b>\$295 Million</b>

### •Impact of Inflation on \$1.00

Period from a 2002 Retirement	Average CPI-U Rate	Purchasing Power left
5 years	2.97%	\$0.86
10 years	2.18%	\$0.80
15 years	2.21%	\$0.72
20 years	2.34%	\$0.62

## **Making Our Voices Heard** *continued from cover...*

### **For Quality, Affordable Health Care**

*In 2022-2023, TSEU will fight any and all attempts to cut funding or water down our health care plans*

TSEU has a 40-year history of fighting for policies and funding to make sure that retired state employees have quality, affordable health care for ourselves and our families. As health care costs increase, there will be increasing pressure in the Legislature to pass costs to employees and retirees and/or to water down our plans. TSEU will continue the fight for adequate funding and to defeat efforts to water down our health plan.

Small increases in out-of-pocket expenses or deductibles have a bigger impact on retirees' budgets because of our reduced income.



### **For a secure ERS system**

*In 2022-2023, TSEU will lead the way in defending the programs and resources of the ERS*

State legislators in nearly every session since the mid-1990s have floated plans to convert our pension plan to a 401(k) model that reduces pensions and forces retirees to depend on the whims of the stock markets for our futures. Legislators have proposed



converting our health plan to defined contribution plans or health savings accounts that would limit our coverage. Legislators even proposed diverting some of our pension funds into the Emerging Technology Fund that would be used to make risky investments.

TSEU members and our allies have successfully fought to defeat these proposals. But we know that the attacks will continue and we must be prepared!



### **For front-line worker, retiree voices on the ERS Board**

*In 2023, TSEU will run a campaign to elect a new TSEU active employee or retired member to the ERS Board of Trustees.*

The ERS Board of Trustees controls our pension and health plans: having a front-line voice on the Board makes a difference. Until 1989, the elected members of the ERS Board were always high-ranking state agency officials.

That changed when TSEU member Janice Zitelman was elected to the Board in 1989. Since then a TSEU member has always been on the Board. TSEU members on the ERS Board have been the first and only front line state employees, and the first and only Black and Latino board members. Our members on the ERS Board have been a consistent, strong voice for front-line state employees and retirees who struggle to make ends meet.

In 2021 TSEU won an important victory when new legislation allowed retirees to be elected to the ERS Board. Previously, retirees could not run for board positions, and sitting board members had to resign their positions if they retired during their terms.

In 2023, TSEU will run a campaign to elect a new TSEU active employee or retired member to the ERS Board of Trustees. Winning ERS Board elections takes a lot of work, but TSEU members are willing to do what's needed to keep a voice on the Board.

*In 2021, TSEU member Neika Clark ran for and was appointed to the ERS Board. We are confident in her ability to represent frontline employees on the ERS Board of Trustees. We are looking forward to doubling TSEU's voice on the ERS board in 2023!*



## **Dear Fellow State Retiree**

**We are state retirees and members of the Texas State Employees Union Retiree Organizing Committee (ROC). We are asking you to join us.**

*Hitting retirement should allow us to relax, spend time with our families and friends, travel, and feel secure that the retirement benefits that we've earned will be there for the rest of our lives. Unfortunately and unfairly, attacks on our pension and health benefits do not stop.*

*Some state leaders openly declare that our pension and health benefits are not guaranteed. Legislators have let two decades go by with our pensions frozen. Our pension checks buy less than half of what they did in 2001, the last time we got an increase. This is largely because legislators cut the state contribution to our pensions in the late 1990s, and the fund never caught up.*

*Ideas frequently floated by legislators would convert our pensions to 401(k) type defined contribution. Other ideas in the Legislature call for our health plan to be converted to a health savings account system. While a lot of these proposals are careful to exempt those who are already retired, history has taught us that if budget slashers can successfully attack some of us, they'll come back for the rest.*

*Most of us were active members of the Texas State Employees Union (TSEU) before we retired. We're proud to be part of the union that has stood and fought for good pay and benefits for active employees and retirees, for quality state services for the people of Texas, and for basic justice and equity in our workplaces and communities. We are proud to continue as TSEU members now that we've retired.*

*The times keep getting harder. The attacks on state employees and state services keep getting worse. But we've learned that, no matter how difficult the challenges, we can win if we stick together and work together. We're asking you to join us in defending our hard fought gains and winning new victories. Send in the enclosed membership form to become a member today.*



# ELECTION '22: Elect leaders that will prioritize state workers AND retirees and get rid of those that don't!



Retirees have been told repeatedly by our elected state officials and their staffs that “it’s not your turn” or “we’ll take care of you next session”; unfortunately, it hasn’t been our turn or next session for more than 20 years! State retiree pension issues can’t be kicked down the road for another session! This year, who gets elected and who stays in office could be the difference between making serious headway on our issues OR being told yet again, “we’ll take care of you next session.” Here are TWO ways you can GET INVOLVED and make an impact this election:

## Level the playing field, JOIN COPE!

We can’t use union dues to donate to campaigns, so we have a separate fund to do this; it’s called COPE, the Committee on Political Education. As state employees, we don’t have millions to donate to political causes and campaigns like some corporations and wealthy individuals, but we do have lots of people. The idea is that if we each give \$5 or \$10 a month to build our COPE fund, we can also help get people elected who will work for us. The reality is that politics in Texas requires money. Joining COPE is making a conscious decision not to stand by and let politics be controlled by corporate interests or rich individuals. COPE is all about leveling the political playing field for the rest of us.



## Participate in election/campaign work

TSEU-ROC members are integral to our get-out-the-vote initiatives AND working directly with legislative candidate’s campaigns. Election work usually involves block-walks and phone banks for area endorsed candidates (that have been previously screened by TSEU members). Contact any TSEU office to get more involved in Election 2022 or go online to the TSEU website for more information.

*TSEU-COPE members from the Houston area blockwalking earlier this year for HD147 candidate, Aurelia Wagner. More campaign work is being planned all the time - get involved!*

## ELECTED OFFICIALS AND STATE RETIREES:

# Regarding pensions, we are NOT all in the same boat

While pensions for state retirees have remained stagnant for over 20 years, State Representatives and State Senators have increased their pension benefits three times over the same period. As a result, when they retire from public office, they can expect to receive much larger annuity checks from our ERS pension fund.

## Elected Class vs. Employee Class

Decades ago, lawmakers created the elected class category of ERS membership that includes only Legislators and other elected officials. This exclusive class has special privileges. Unlike state employees, their pension benefit is not based on salary, but rather on the annual base salary of a state district judge. Currently, that salary

is \$140,000. Elected officials don’t have to meet the rule of 80 to be eligible for their pension. They are eligible for full pension benefits when they reach either the age of 60 with eight years of service or the age of 50 with 12 years of service. During this same 20+ years our pensions have remained stagnant, benefits for future retirees have been watered down. In 2009 and 2013, legislators approved cuts in benefits for future retirees in the Employee Class that would not apply to future retirees of the Elected Class. Importantly, while the contribution rate for members of the Elected Class to the ERS is the same as members of the Employee Class - 9.5% of salary - State Reps. and State Senators are paid \$7,200 per year. Legislators have regularly increased their own per diem though, which now ranks as one of the highest in the country at \$221/day while in Session.

ERS RETIREMENT:	ELECTED CLASS	EMPLOYEE CLASS
<b>Salary used to: calculate pension:</b>	\$140,000	Average of highest 3 to 5 years of salary
<b>Minimum age: to retire:</b>	60 with 8 years of service or 50 with 12 years service	Age + Years of Service = 80 (or 65 if hired after 9/1/13)
<b>Increases: since 2001:</b>	<b>2005:</b> Increased salary used to calculate pension to \$125,000 <b>2009:</b> Increased multiplier in annuity formula from 2% to 2.3% <b>2013:</b> Increased salary used to calculate pension to \$140,000	since 2001, there have been 0 (zero) increases



# YES!

***I want to assist TSEU's Organizing staff to BUILD OUR STRENGTH by organizing at a state agency, university, or facility near me!***

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS (STREET/PO BOX, CITY, STATE, ZIP) \_\_\_\_\_

(\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE

I RETIRED FROM (AGENCY/UNIVERSITY) \_\_\_\_\_

YEAR RETIRED \_\_\_\_\_

Days/times I'm usually available  
(check all applicable):

<input type="checkbox"/> Monday	<input type="checkbox"/> AM	<input type="checkbox"/> PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/> AM	<input type="checkbox"/> PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Wed	<input type="checkbox"/> AM	<input type="checkbox"/> PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/> AM	<input type="checkbox"/> PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday	<input type="checkbox"/> AM	<input type="checkbox"/> PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/> AM	<input type="checkbox"/> PM
<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday	<input type="checkbox"/> AM	<input type="checkbox"/> PM

**TSEU-ROC: THE RETIREE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE**  
TEXAS STATE EMPLOYEES UNION / [www.cwa-tseu.org](http://www.cwa-tseu.org) / 512.448.4225

☐ I would like more information.  
Please contact me.

ORGANIZE WITH A TSEU ORGANIZER: If you want to help in recruiting new members to TSEU from around where you live or at your former office or work location, please fill out the form above or for more information, call Alex Moir at TSEU (239)287-3307.

## Be a ROC Star - help our union grow stronger!



### TSEU STATE OFFICES

**CENTRAL TX** | 512.448-4225  
1700 South 1st St  
Austin, TX 78704

**SOUTH TEXAS** | 210.354-2900  
1412 El Paso St  
San Antonio, TX 78207

**NORTH TEXAS** | 214.942-4305  
737 S. RL Thornton Frwy, Ste B  
Dallas, TX 75203

**SOUTHEAST** | 713.661-9030  
9247 South Main  
Houston, TX 77025

**WEST TEXAS** | 806.741-0044  
2002 Avenue J  
Lubbock, TX 79405

Find us online at:  
[www.cwa-tseu.org](http://www.cwa-tseu.org)  
[facebook.com/CWA.TSEU](https://facebook.com/CWA.TSEU)



TEXAS STATE EMPLOYEES UNION/CWA  
1700 S 1ST ST  
AUSTIN TX 78704-9965  
POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**  
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 4820 AUSTIN, TX







# 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    ☐ UPG    ☐ RR    ORG: \_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION C: MEMBERSHIP AND AUTHORIZATION

Membership dues and effective date of payroll deduction: the 1<sup>st</sup> day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_  
(MONTH)

- ☐ \$17.00 salary below \$20,000    ☐ \$21.00 salary \$20,000-\$25,000    ☐ \$25.00 salary \$25,000-\$30,000  
☐ \$28.00 salary \$30,000-\$40,000    ☐ \$30.00 salary \$40,000-\$50,000    ☐ \$32.00 salary over \$50,000  
☐ \$13.00 part time    ☐ other - \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**AUTHORIZATION:** I understand that I cannot be compelled to be a member of a state employee organization or to pay dues to a state employee organization as a condition of employment with the state. While I am free to join a state employee organization, I understand that I may change or cancel this authorization at any time by providing written notice to my employer. I voluntarily authorize a monthly payroll deduction in the amount shown above from my salary or wages for membership fees to the state employee organization listed above and agree to comply with the comptroller's rules concerning this deduction. I agree that my name, social security number, personal contact information, and the amount of my payroll deduction for membership fees may be provided to the state employee organization listed above only for the purpose of informing the state employee organization about the payroll deduction.

SIGNATURE

DATE

I agree to comply with the rules adopted by the Comptroller concerning deductions for dues and will submit this application to HR to establish the deduction and provide a copy to TSEU.

# I want to build our political power by joining COPE!



I authorize TSEU to draft my account monthly for the amount that I have indicated and to forward these funds to CWA COPE.

## HELP MAKE SURE OUR UNION IS UNBREAKABLE!

If dues deduction from my salary/wages becomes prohibited by law, I hereby authorize TSEU to commence and continue deducting monthly TSEU dues from the bank or credit union account identified here, in the same monthly dues amount as then on file with TSEU.

INITIAL

NAME

SOCIAL SECURITY #

MAILING ADDRESS (STREET/PO BOX, CITY, STATE, ZIP)

( )  
HOME PHONE( )  
WORK PHONE

EMAIL

AGENCY, UNIVERSITY, ORGANIZATION

MONTHLY DEDUCTION (CHECK ONE):

COPE CLUB

☐ \$5.00 ☐ \$10.00

PLATINUM QUORUM

☐ \$20.00

TRIPLE QUORUM

☐ \$30.00

OTHER AMOUNT

☐ \_\_\_\_\_☐ I'm using this form to make my union UNBREAKABLE

BANK NAME

BANK ADDRESS

ROUTING #

ACCOUNT #

DRAFT FROM (CHECK ONE) ☐ CHECKING ☐ SAVINGS

DRAFT BEGINS MONTH OF \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_

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.

SIGNATURE

DATE



State employees and state services are under constant attack, and COPE is one way to build the political power to fight back. Politics affects our lives every day. Budget cuts, privatization, and our own salaries and health care are all controlled by the Texas Legislature and other elected officials. Money counts in politics. Candidates must win elections before they can help make laws. Grass-roots volunteer work is very important in winning elections, and so are other forms of campaigning that cost money for a candidate. Wealthy corporations and individuals give lots of money to get their friends elected. We need more of our friends in elected offices. We state employees can not afford large individual contributions. We do not control vast corporate treasuries that can give thousands of dollars at a time. But we can make our voice heard by pooling many small contributions so they have a large impact. CWA-COPE allows us to gain a stronger voice in the political process.

# JOIN COPE and MAKE YOUR UNION UNBREAKABLE!

**WHEN YOU SIGN UP TO JOIN COPE, MAKE YOUR TSEU MEMBERSHIP UNBREAKABLE AT THE SAME TIME!** Be sure to initial the box on the form above and in the event something happens to your ability to pay dues through payroll deduction, the banking information supplied for COPE will be used to draft your dues as well. ALSO, if you don't want to join COPE (or are already a member), but still want to make your membership UNBREAKABLE, fill out the entire form, but instead of selecting a monthly deduction amount, mark the spot next to "I'm using this form to make my union UNBREAKABLE".



----- FOLD IN THIRDS - SEAL WITH TAPE - SEND IT INI -----



AUSTIN TX 78704-9965

1700 S 1ST ST

TEXAS STATE EMPLOYEES UNION/CWA

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**  
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 4820 AUSTIN, TX







Seeking volunteers to be  
TSEU's ERS Board candidate

## We need union voices on the Board of Trustees

The Employee Retirement System maintains and controls the retirement plan for all state agency employees and the health care plan that covers all agency AND university employees (except those in the UT and A&M systems). The ERS is governed by a six-person Board of Trustees. Three trustees are elected by agency employees and retirees while the other three are appointed. Candidates for elected positions on the ERS Board must be retired or active employees of a Texas state agency that is NOT already represented on the ERS Board. The Board already includes representatives from DPS, Tx DoT and HHSC (includes DFPS, DARS, DSHS, and DADS).

In 2020, TSEU members worked hard to get Neika Clark onto the ERS Board of Trustees. Now we have a chance to make the voice of frontline employees and retirees even louder by winning again next year. We are calling on all frontline state workers to step up and help a TSEU candidate win in the 2023 election. We have the power in our numbers and influence among co-workers at our jobs; we know we can win again! TSEU has run a candidate in every ERS Board election since 1989 and this time around will be no different. The TSEU Executive Board will recommend a candidate after going through our screening committee. The TSEU candidate will be selected by the General Assembly.

### If you are interested in being TSEU's candidate to the ERS Board of Trustees:

Write a letter stating why you would be a good candidate. Detail organizing/mobilizing campaigns that you have participated in, including past ERS campaigns; as well as relevant experience or education that would serve you as an ERS Board member. List your agency, location, job title, years of service and years as a TSEU member.

SEND YOUR LETTER TO:

**TSEU ERS CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE**  
1700 SOUTH 1ST ST. / AUSTIN TX, 78704

DEADLINE TO SEND INTEREST LETTER:

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 26**

## TSEU Executive Board stands in support if the LGBTQ+ community Opposes Gov. Abbott's attack on transgender families

In February, Governor Abbott directed DFPS to investigate parents of Transgender children for abuse solely on the basis of the children being Transgender. This weaponization of DFPS came after the failure of S.B. 1646 by Sen. Birdwell in the last legislative session that would have classified providing gender affirming health care to transgender minors as child abuse.

Our members who are charged with protecting children and families are being ordered to violate long-standing codes of ethics that include provisions of gender affirming care supported by the American Medical Association, American Psychiatric Association, the National Association of Social Workers, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and others. Governor Abbott's letter violates the civil rights and privacy of children and families that already experience illegal discrimination. It exposes Texas Department of Family and Protective Services workers to moral injury and professional censure by demanding that they go against their moral beliefs and the standards of their professions.

The effects on members of the LGBTQ+ community from this latest attack are profound. The impact on children and families has been devastating. Turning the power of the State of Texas against children and loving families has further marginalized and stigmatized adolescents that are already at a much higher risk of self-harm and suicide in our society.

Following the May ruling from the Texas Supreme Court and the lifting of a court order to stop investigations of families based solely on a child being Transgender, DFPS officials announced they would continue these investigations. The climate of fear this has created has already driven some families to leave Texas, while other children and families have retreated to the shadows and stopped life-saving non-medical therapies that help children through the stages of gender dysphoria.

The Texas State Employees Union will strongly support state workers who make the hard choice to stand up to the directive, and defend them against any retaliation and abuse. We will continue to work with, learn from, and support our allies in the LGBTQ+ community. Together, we must stop this ugly, shameful weaponization of DFPS directed toward LGBTQ+ children and their families.



### TSEU EXECUTIVE BOARD

Judy Lugo (HHSC, El Paso, retired) President  
Myko Gedutis (TSEU Houston) Vice President  
Joanne Day (DSHS, Austin) Secretary  
Samm Almaguer (TWC, Houston) Treasurer  
Albert Zepeda (HHSC Brownsville) Region 1  
Arthur Valdez (DSHS-Retired, San Antonio) Reg. 2  
Yvette Sherman (FPS-Retired, San Angelo) Reg. 3  
Rodney Brown (Dallas) Region 4  
Yolanda White (HHSC, Lufkin SSLC) Region 5  
Ilesa Daniels (HHSC, Houston) Region 6  
Freddie Greer (HHSC, Mexia SSLC) Reg. 7  
Anne Lewis (UT-Austin) Region 8

### TSEU STAFF AND OFFICES

**CENTRAL TEXAS**  
512.448-4225

1700 South 1<sup>st</sup> St  
Austin, TX 78704

Ron Day, Lead Organizer  
Alex Moir, Organizer  
Sol Weiner, Organizer  
Aviv Rau, Organizer

Tyler Sheldon, Legislative Director  
Margaret Allen, Office Manager  
John Behr, IT

Rachel Telles, Membership Office  
Chris Knapp, Publications

**SOUTH TEXAS**  
210.354-2900

1412 El Paso St  
San Antonio, TX 78207

Missy Benavidez, Organizing Coordinator

**NORTH TEXAS**  
214.942-4305

737 S. RL Thornton Frwy, Ste B  
Dallas, TX 75203

Francisco Santillan, Organizer

**SOUTHEAST**  
713.661-9030

9247 South Main  
Houston, TX 77025

Myko Gedutis, Organizing Coordinator  
Steven Stokes, Organizer  
Gloria Jeffery, Organizer

**WEST TEXAS**  
806.741-0044

2002 Avenue J  
Lubbock, TX 79405

Aviv Rau, Organizer  
Alex Moir, Organizer  
Francisco Santillan, Organizer

Find us online at: [www.cwa-tseu.org](http://www.cwa-tseu.org)  
OR [facebook.com/CWA.TSEU](https://facebook.com/CWA.TSEU)



# TEXAS STATE EMPLOYEES UNION

Communications Workers of America  
1700 South 1<sup>st</sup> Street  
Austin, TX 78704

NON PROFIT ORG.  
US POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT NO 1025  
AUSTIN, TX

The TSEU General Assembly is a statewide meeting of elected delegates along with other members, special invited guests and family. Held every even-numbered year, the General Assembly adopts the broad strategic plans that guide decision-making in TSEU for the next 2 years. These plans are contained in the Organizing Program and Political Program, which also detail retiree, state agency, and university-specific goals for the upcoming session of the Texas Legislature.

The General Assembly also makes decisions and adopts positions on specific issues like the selection of TSEU candidates for the ERS and TRS boards.

All members in good standing are invited and encouraged to participate in debates, discussions, and meetings; however, final votes on issues are limited to elected TSEU member delegates (information about GA delegates is below).

Finally, the General Assembly is a lot of fun! It's one of the best opportunities for members from across the state to meet one another, renew friendships, and enjoy the companionship of fellow union members. We will be meeting over the course of two

## Austin, TX | September 17<sup>th</sup> AND 24<sup>th</sup> **GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

consecutive Saturdays: September 17<sup>th</sup> will be all virtual and our gathering on September 24<sup>th</sup> will be held in person in Austin, with a virtual option. We hope to see you there!

### BE A DELEGATE TO THIS YEAR'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The best way to be at General Assembly is to be a delegate! Delegates are elected on the basis of one delegate per 50 members and could represent specific locations, an agency or university, cities, or regions (for details about YOUR delegate group, contact your nearest TSEU office or organizer). We are now accepting nominations for all delegate spots. If you want to be a delegate or to nominate a fellow member, the nominee must be a current TSEU member as of MAY 2022 and on TSEU's current dues schedule. Nominations can be made by contacting any TSEU office or your organizer and will be accepted from now until Saturday, June 30<sup>th</sup> at 5:00PM.

### OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS, DESIGN OUR OFFICIAL LOGO: General Assembly logo contest

This logo/design will appear on all General Assembly materials, including the event t-shirt, and on a future UPDATE cover. Designs should reflect the theme "Organize To Win." The winner will be recognized during the General Assembly Awards Banquet. Printer-ready artwork is great, but we are looking for (and will acknowledge work of) designs or concepts at any level or ability - no matter how 'rough' your artwork, send it along!

**DEADLINE IS FRIDAY, JULY 15.** For more details email Chris Knapp (cknapp@cwa-tseu.org) or call Margaret Allen in the TSEU Austin office (512)448-4225.

- For consideration, please provide an 8½ x 11 sample. Mail your design to the Austin TSEU office or email it to Chris Knapp at: cknapp@cwa-tseu.org
- It must include the words: 'TSEU General Assembly', 'Austin Texas, September 17 and 24'. **Design must include (and be centered around) this year's General Assembly theme: 'Organize to Win!'**
- The design will be printed on a red t-shirt and is usually 2-3 colors. Final designs may be subject to changes.

