



May 1, 2023

As the members of the HB1 conference committee prepare to begin budget negotiations, we are reaching out on behalf of eight statewide organizations that represent thousands of the 122,000 retired state workers and their beneficiaries who receive ERS pensions and live in every district in the state.

We are deeply concerned that the budget does not include a 13th check, Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA), or any other immediate relief for retired State of Texas employees. They dedicated their careers to our state and are struggling to keep up with record inflation. A secure retirement has been vital, as deferred compensation, to keep good workers providing essential services to the citizens of Texas.

ERS retirees have not received COLA, a pension increase, or a 13th check since 2001. In that time, the cost of living has increased by 37%. These retirees protected public safety and served vulnerable children and the elderly in every county and legislative district. They built the infrastructure that allowed Texas to grow and prosper.

Providing a pre-funded 13th check for all State of Texas retirees would cost only \$250 million in a \$308 billion budget. A 13th check would go to all retired employees and could be distributed within months without negatively affecting ERS's actuarial soundness.

Some of your legislative colleagues have told us they believe the budget already "takes care" of retirees through an existing COLA. But that's not the case. State law allows for a very limited COLA, but ERS estimates that can't happen for at least another 18 months. And even when it does happen, it would be limited to only 30% of our most senior retirees and provide just a maximum of \$100 a month.

With this historic budget surplus, we call on you to take urgent action to provide ERS retirees some immediate financial relief, remember their contributions, and recognize their challenges.

We appreciate all you have accomplished over the past few months through dozens of budget hearings, hundreds of witness testimonies, and countless hard conversations about priorities. As

you finish that work, please remember our retirees. For years, they willingly earned less than they could have in the private sector to serve our state.

Please let us know if we can provide additional information or answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Lt. Richard Jankovsky, **Department of Public Safety Officers Association**

Lt. Billy Shelton, **Texas State Troopers Association**

Jeff Ormsby, **AFSCME Texas Correctional Employees Council**

Larry Young, **Texas Game Warden Peace Officers Association**

Bill Hamilton, **Retired State Employees Association**

Joe "Dan" Maxwell, **Texas Public Employees Association, Retirees Chapter**

Luther Elmore, **AFSCME Texas Retirees**

Judy Lugo, **Texas State Employees Union**

Handwritten signatures in blue ink:

- Richard Jankovsky
- Larry E. Young
- Dan Maxwell
- Jeff Ormsby
- W.C. Bill Hamilton
- Luther Elmore
- Billy A. Shelton