

All state employees need better retirement

The Texas House and Senate are advancing proposals to give Texas' retired teachers a COLA and 13th check, an acknowledgment retirees are struggling with inflation. Both are well deserved and I am happy that the Legislature is taking care of our retired teachers.

However, despite having a historic budget surplus, there is a group that is being left out this session and is every bit as deserving: our retired state employees.

It's been 22 years since anyone with the state employees retirement system (ERS) has received any kind of increase in benefits. With more than 122,000 retired members who were state employees including state troopers, game wardens, correction officers among them, the average pension for these retirees is \$18,000 per year. Inflation and more than two decades of doing nothing for them hurts.

The legislature has taken laudable action to fix the funds for ERS and once actuarially sound an existing law in the government code will give a small percentage of them (less than 30%) 3% of their monthly annuity or \$100 whichever is less. However, this partial and meager COLA for ERS retirees is not projected to occur until 2025.

At the same time TRS retirees are about to receive their third 13th check and a healthy COLA. Again, they deserve it, but so do all retirees of state employment.

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