



MRTA
MISSOURI RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
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Dear Legislators and Statewide Office Holders:

The 28,000 members of MRTA (Missouri Retired Teachers Association and Public School Personnel) sincerely wish you a successful Legislative Session in 2019. Your work is so very important to the quality of life for all Missourians. We are consistent voters and taxpayers in your districts and the state of Missouri. We respectfully ask that you review our 2019 MRTA Issues of Importance below that are being personally delivered to your office and ask your consideration of our views on certain issues as of February 12th 2019. Retired public school educators contribute close to \$3 billion to Missouri's economy each year, a sizable economic impact to say the least. It is this defined benefit pension plan that is essential in attracting and then retaining the very best educators for Missouri children. We also ask that in a time of shrinking state revenues funding of public education be a top priority.

Please do not hesitate to contact MRTA if you have any questions or if we can be of assistance to you.

2019 MRTA ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE

PRIORITY #1 - MRTA strongly opposes - HB 864 (Taylor Rep. – 139) This legislation provides an option to all educators to opt for a DC - 401(k) plan. If passed, this legislation will decrease contributions to the PSRS/PEERS system for investment which will jeopardize the financial health of the system. If passed this legislation will eliminate all COLAs, possibly result in reduced pension benefits to retirees, and will significantly increase the contributions to the system from active educators.

PRIORITY #2 – MRTA supports HB 723 (Pike Rep.– 126) This legislation is an MRTA priority and allows pension benefits to “POP UP” after a divorce with the ruling on assets by a court. HB 723 makes this provision retroactive for those divorced prior to Sept. 1, 2017. This bill is similar to HB 304 of 2017.

PRIORITY #3 – MRTA supports HB 77 (Black Rep.-7), SB 17 (Romine Rep.-3.) Exempts any person retired or receiving allowance from PSRS and employed by a public community college from current law related to working-after-retirement (W.A.R.) provisions.

PRIORITY #4 – MRTA supports HB 69 (Dinkins Rep.-144). This legislation re-establishes the 2.55 factor for those working 31 years or longer. This legislation has a positive financial effect on the PSRS system. The longer one works the fewer benefits that will be paid as one gets closer to death.

PRIORITY #5 - MRTA supports full funding of the Foundation Formula and opposes the use of public tax dollars for private schools. The Missouri Constitution mandates adequate funding of K-12 education through HB 2 which requires education funding as the second priority of state expenditures. *Comment: Due to several tax cuts enacted by the legislature over the past few years general revenue is expected to be reduced significantly. MRTA asks funding for Public Education be the #1 priority.*

PRIORITY #6 – MRTA supports SB 78 (Sater Rep.-29) This legislation would restore to over 60,000 elderly Missourians state assistance for prescription drugs. Many older MRTA members are at minimum retirement benefit and many are not eligible for Medicare. This legislation would be of great help to their quality of life

PRIORITY #7 - MRTA opposes SB 160 (Koenig Rep.-13). This act establishes the Missouri Empowerment Scholarship Accounts Program. *Comment: These are voucher schemes which create a new 100% tax credit allowing up to \$25 million per year of state revenue to be used for private school tuition and other expenses for students. This will result in up to \$25 million less state revenue for public education per year. These bills take scarce tax revenue away from public education.*

PRIORITY #8 – MRTA opposes HB 581 (Roebber Rep. 34). Charter School Expansion – This bill would allow charter schools outside entities and operate in districts around the state. Charter schools are not subject to the same standards of accountability as public schools. *Comment: Charter schools take scarce tax revenue from public education. Currently, charter schools are only allowed in St. Louis and Kansas City.*

PRIORITY #9 - MRTA supports and asks for legislation to allow a Cost of Living Adjustment for St. Louis City and Kansas City retired educators. Currently, St. Louis City retired educators have not had a COLA since 2006. Their spending power has been significantly reduced. COLAs are essential to the quality of life of education retirees.

MRTA, a 501(c)(4) not-for-profit corporation, is a grassroots advocacy association with nearly 28,000 members. MRTA is independent, nonpartisan, and does not endorse political candidates.