



Senate Votes on Retirement Changes

The Senate today voted to pass HB 653, an act that will make changes to the retirement system. Those changes are needed to ensure the long-term health of the system. I won't go into the specifics of the bill, but one thing that it does not contain is a pre-funded COLA. That issue will have to be addressed during the summer by a retirement study commission.

The vote taken today was an important step forward. The bill will now pass to the House and any differences between the House language and Senate language will be ironed out. I expect that a committee of conference will meet some time the week after next.

I cannot stress strongly enough to you that the success or failure of the system and the protection of your benefits depends on you. You must call and write to your legislators when I ask that you do. If you don't do that then you risk losing your pension benefits. This is not a dramatic call designed to overstate reality. It is how things are. I served a total of eighteen years in the House and Senate and I have worked as your lobbyist for 6 years. Not until today did I believe that the system itself was truly at risk.

We have made it easier for you to contact your legislators through links on the NEA-NH Web site.

On another note, those of you who have purchased nonqualified time with the expectation that it will be counted towards your twenty minimum years of service can rest easily. I have been told that those unqualified years purchased will be counted toward that benefit.

Rick Trombly
Director of Public Affairs
NEA-NH

rtrombly@nhnea.org