



LEGISLATIVE *Update*

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SEANC Pushes Legislators to Keep Their Promises *Senate Budget Expected Next Week*

As we reported in last week's legislative update, the N.C. House released its budget and failed to provide a base pay increase for state employees or a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for retirees. Instead, they included a \$250 one-time bonus to active employees. This is no substitute for a base pay raise.

The only positive thing about the House budget was the provision granting five days of annual leave to active employees. SEANC hopes that in the final budget, the House is able to push to keep these five days of annual leave but also revise the bill to get a state employee base pay raise and a COLA for retirees.

Now it is the N.C. Senate's turn to draft a budget. They have been putting the finishing touches on their version of the budget and the word on the street is that it will roll out in the Appropriations Committee on Tuesday and then voted on in the Senate by the end of next week.

SEANC has been working hard with the Senate to achieve a real pay increase and not just a bonus for state employees. In addition, we have been working with the Senate to procure a COLA for retirees.

As a reminder, the House and Senate set \$121.1 million aside in last year's budget for state employee pay raises. That budget also set the employer contribution rate for the retirement system at a level that would allow the use of \$63 million in retirement system gains for a COLA.

Those two acts in last year's budget are the "promises" SEANC is lobbying lawmakers to keep. SEANC Executive Director Dana Cope has been meeting with the Senate leadership, saying, "I feel that the Senate takes their promises seriously and will honor the ones they made to state employees and retirees."

Once the Senate budget is passed, the House and Senate will appoint "conferees" who resolve any differences in the budget documents. This is when it will be imperative that SEANC members contact their legislators to ask that they honor the promises made to state employees and retirees.

We are going to need your help! SEANC will have a list of conferees on our website as soon as they are appointed. Please refer to that list when it is available for contact information.