



State Employees Association of North Carolina • [www.seanc.org](http://www.seanc.org)

# LEGISLATIVE *Update*

July 17, 2015

## General Assembly returns, but makes little progress

The General Assembly returned to work this week from its summer break, but little happened in the way of real progress on a budget deal between the House and the Senate.

The two sides are still far apart on their priorities. House Speaker Tim Moore (R-Cleveland) made a bold move this week by [putting 82 members on the House's conference committee team](#) – more than half of the entire 120-member body. Moore said it was an attempt to be “very inclusive and encourage participation.” The list includes both Republicans and Democrats. It does not include 11 Republicans and 13 Democrats who voted against the House's budget.

The Senate remained largely quiet this week on the budget front and has yet to name its conferees. There were rumors that leadership planned to close all committees for the session in another week. If that happened, the Senate would likely hold skeleton sessions until conferees worked out a budget deal and would not hold votes on other bills.

Hopefully the budget dance will heat up next week. The continuing resolution that keeps state government running expires on Aug. 14, which is less than a month away now.

If you'll recall, the House passed a proposal that reflected a concern for the services provided by state employees, giving a 2-percent raise and 40 hours of bonus leave to active employees and a 2-percent cost-of-living adjustment to retirees, while fully funding the retirement system.

The Senate's plan looks a lot like the Governor's proposal. Despite touting a \$400 million surplus, the plan includes no across-the-board raises for active employees and no cost-of-living adjustments for retirees, even though investment gains would pay for one without adding to the bottom line.

SEANC's lobbyists will be on the ground every day the legislature is in session to remind lawmakers that [state employees have fallen behind the price of goods and services over the last five years](#) to the point that salaries aren't worth nearly as much as they were. This has resulted in a net salary decrease for state employees in that time of almost 7 percent. Retiree cost-of-living adjustments have been even worse, resulting in a net decrease in buying power of more than 8 percent for our state's retirees over the last five years.

## **Bills concerning retirement administration pass Senate**

Two bills of concern to SEANC members did pass the Senate this week— House bills 276 and 277. Both involved administrative changes to the retirement system. SEANC lobbyists were concerned they would be amended to change the way the state’s annual required contribution (ARC) is calculated by setting the interest rate assumption at 7.20 percent.

Neither bill was amended to include this provision, though the Senate already attempted to do this by making it a part of its state budget.

## **Contact your legislators**

Now is the time for you to [contact your lawmakers](#). Make your voice heard on the need for all state employees to receive a pay raise and all retirees to receive a cost-of-living increase. We need all hands on deck. Help your legislators put a face to state employees, SEANC and their constituents. Not sure who your legislators are? [Click here](#). Curious whether they were endorsed by EMPAC? [Click here](#). Want to make note of all of SEANC’s legislative priorities before talking to them? [Click here](#).

SEANC staff can also help you schedule meetings with your lawmakers and make sure you have the most up-to-date information possible about SEANC’s legislative priorities, so you can have a good and productive conversation. All you have to do is let us know you’re coming. Just email [tbooe@seanc.org](mailto:tbooe@seanc.org) or call 800-222-2758.

Can’t make it to Raleigh? No problem. You can call, write or email your legislators – or even schedule your own time to meet with them in your hometown. Again, you can find your lawmakers and their contact information [here](#).