



State Employees Association of North Carolina • www.seanc.org

LEGISLATIVE *Update*

Aug. 28, 2015

Negotiators reach compromise of \$750 bonus for state employees

The General Assembly was forced to pass another continuing resolution on Thursday to extend the budget debate to Sept. 18, but not before announcement that the most important part to state employees had been decided.

House and Senate budget negotiators announced Wednesday [they had reached an agreement on a \\$750 bonus for all state employees this year](#).

The bonus equates to around a 1.75% pay increase for the average state employee. Anyone making less than \$37,500 annually will receive more than a 2-percent increase with the bonus – more than they would have received in even the House budget.

Legislators hinted that it would be paid out in a lump sum around Christmas. In fact, Sen. Phil Berger went as far as calling it a “Christmas bonus.”

As you know, SEANC always pushes for a salary increase rather than a one-time bonus, because a salary increase is recurring and has a positive effect on retirement calculations. But two out of the three budget proposals on the table this year, the Senate and the Governor’s proposals, included no pay increase or bonus whatsoever, so the bonus is at least better than those plans.

The deal also includes step-pay increases for state troopers, magistrates and teachers. Some community college workers and correctional officers will receive an even larger increase in pay from the deal.

No decision has been made yet on the fate of more than 9,000 teacher assistant jobs that were cut in the Senate budget, as well as the administrative jobs cut from the Department of Transportation.

The deal includes no extra funding for retiree cost-of-living adjustments but does leave the door open to the paying for COLAs through investment gains. If you’ll recall, the Retirement Systems Board of Trustees called for a 1-percent COLA using gains this year.

SEANC continues to advocate for a COLA, which would cost the state nothing, as well as the inclusion of 40 hours of bonus leave, which was in the House’s budget plan. We need you to contact your legislator and tell them to support both of these.

What would you do with five extra days off?

As the Legislative Update states, budget negotiations are entering their final stages. While it seems legislators have agreed on a bonus for state employees, the fate of the five days of extra leave in the House budget has yet to be decided.

We need to be able to prove to legislators that you need that extra time with your family. [Please click here to let us know what you would do with five days of extra leave this year.](#) In the past, [members have told us](#) they use that time to work at the state fair to supplement their income, or to take time off to visit a relative or care or a loved one with an illness. Perhaps you just plan to take the kids on a trip, or get some work done around the house.

Whatever it is, [we need to know!](#)

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 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](#).