

IRTA is the organization that works exclusively for retired teachers It currently represents over 37,000 members

- ★ For 32 years, the IRTA Foundation has been providing assistance to educators of the past, the present, and is committed to the future. This assistance is due to the generosity of our membership.
- ★ For over 60 years IRTA has upheld the stated purpose of the Association “to maintain and improve benefits to annuitants of the Teacher Retirement System; to promote education and the professional, social, and economic status of all members; and to work in cooperation with other organizations to obtain these goals.”
- ★ There’s no better example of fulfilling the IRTA purpose than the the Illinois Supreme Court victory in the “Heaton” decision that upheld our position that pension benefits are guaranteed and insurance is part of these benefits. We also must recognize the concerns of our active colleagues and will remain supportive of their actions to preserve collective bargaining rights and other rights and benefits.

Major Legislative Accomplishments that the IRTA actively supported

- 1956** A provision allowed retired teachers to substitute-teach without their loss of pension.
- 1957-58** Pensions were increased so that those annuitants with pensions of \$87 per month would now receive \$125 per month. This increase applied to several hundred annuitants with 50 years of experience.
- 1978** The post-retirement annual increase for annuitants with service after July 1, 1969, became 3% (simple).
- 1981** Health insurance and prescription drug insurance plan is instituted.
- 1982** Survivor’s benefit increased to 50% of deceased spouse’s current pension and death benefit set to \$3,000.
- 1984** Active teachers are allowed to count one year of accumulated sick leave toward retirement service.
- 1985** A provision allowed for an elected annuitant on the TRS Board of Trustees.
- 1989** Governor signed into law SB 95, which compounds the 3% annual increase (based on current pensions) for annuitants and survivors and instructs the State to increase contributions to the 5 State-funded pension systems in order to amortize unfunded liabilities, with interest, over a 40-year period.
- 1991** The Legislature approved, and the Governor signed, legislation providing for a 75% subsidy of the health insurance plan, with funding to continue for the teachers’ pension fund.
- 1991** A teacher may purchase up to 2 years retirement credit for military service.
- 1992** The Early Retirement Incentive (5 + 5 Plan) was passed.
- 1993** IRTA seeks health insurance plan for retired educators comparable with health plans for other State-funded retirement systems.
- 1995** IRTA spearheaded legislation (Public Act 88-593) which guaranteed that the pensions would be 90% funded by 2045.

- 1999** IRTA helped negotiate a gubernatorial executive order improving health insurance benefits. Effective July 1, 2000, deductibles for both Teachers Retirement Insurance Plan (TRIP) and Teachers Choice Health Plan (TCHP) were drastically reduced. In addition, TCHP's general out-of-pocket maximum was lowered and co-ordination of Medicare's benefits were improved.
- 2001** Public Act 92-505 was signed into law preventing an 80% health insurance premium increase for retirees.
- 2001** HB 4347 allowed for a second elected annuitant on the TRS Board of Trustees.
- 2004** Representatives of the IRTA worked with the Governor to finalize an extension of the Teacher's Retirement Insurance Program (TRIP) with no sunset date.
- 2005** IRTA succeeded in passing legislation (PA94-0691) which prevents the Governor from transferring funds from the Teachers Health Insurance Security Fund to the General Revenue Fund in order to help defray the State's operating costs.
- 2009** IRTA efforts prevented a 25% health insurance (TRIP) premium increase for out-of-state retirees.
- 2010** IRTA VoterVoice efforts (over 3000 e-mails were sent) prevented the General Assembly from passing legislation that would have allowed the State of Illinois to issue IOU's to TRS for the 2011 pension payment.
- 2015** In 2015, the IRTA won the landmark decision by the Illinois Supreme Court on our lawsuit (Doris Heaton vs. Pat Quinn, Governor, State of Illinois) which argued that the pension reform law, SB1, was a violation of the pension protection clause of the constitution. The Supreme Court ruled unanimously in favor of the IRTA and protected the pension benefits of annuitants.
- 2016** IRTA's legislative efforts paid off this year when the General Assembly made the full pension payment to both TRS and TRIP. The total payment, certified by the TRS Board, meets the states' obligation to the teachers of Illinois.

AS A RETIRED EDUCATOR, WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP MY FELLOW RETIRED EDUCATORS?

1. Join the local Northwest Suburban IRTA - Unit 90. You can do so for \$10 / year, or \$40 / 5 years, or \$100 for life.
2. Join the State IRTA through automatic monthly deduction for only \$30 / year, or pay \$175 / 5 years, or \$400 for life.
3. Donate to our IRTA Political Action Committee and protect the status of retired educators by donating just \$1 / month through automatic monthly pension deduction.
4. Donate to the IRTA Foundation, which currently does the following:
 - (a) Assists annuitants on a monthly basis
 - (b) Awards teacher education scholarships
 - (c) Provides "Excellence in Education" grants to public school educators

(Thanks to Rich Chierico for compiling this list)