

May 17, 2021

**Summary of current events:**

**Conference Committee Agrees on Charge, Composition of Legislative Pension Task Force.** We have some good news to report: The conference committee on [H.449](#) has reached agreement on the charge to and composition of the legislative pension task force. Here are the highlights:

- **Fair Charge:** The charge to the committee is unchanged from that passed by the Senate. This was our hope, and it means that the task force's outcome won't be predetermined; the task force will be free to be creative and have wider latitude to include dedicated revenue streams; and the task force must study the effects of any proposals on the education workforce and on the state and local economies.
- **Balance Composition:** The task force will be balanced. The composition changed slightly from the version passed by the Senate, but its voting membership remains split between labor unions and non-beneficiaries. The House will have three seats; the Senate will have two; the administration will have one seat; Vermont-NEA will have three seats; the Vermont State Employees Association will have two; the Vermont Troopers Association will have one; and the treasurer's office will have one non-voting seat.
- **Reasonable Timeline:** The task force will have more time to complete its work. The initial meeting will be on June 15; an interim report is due October 15; and the final recommendation is due December 15. This was also in the version passed by the Senate.

While this is clearly an incremental development in our fight to protect our pension, it is a victory. And it came about because of hard work on the part of Vermont-NEA members who organized and made sure their voices were heard.

The conferees' bill will now move back to the House and Senate, where a simple up-or-down (no floor amendments are allowed) vote takes place. The measure is expected to pass easily, and then it will go to the governor.

**Learn How Teachers' Pension Has Changed Over Time in New Webinar – Thurs May 27, 4:30pm:**

Over the past five months, the status of the Vermont State Teachers' Retirement System, and potential changes to retirement benefits, have dominated the legislative conversation. **Vermont-NEA Director of Member Benefits Mark Hage will lead a webinar at 4:30 pm on May 27 for Vermont-NEA members about the history of the system's changes over the past several decades and about the state of current retirement benefits.** Because of the amazing work of Vermont-NEA members, the legislature has stepped back on action this year and created a task force (see above) to look at the pension issue. Now is an important time for Vermont-NEA members to dig into what benefits currently exist and the history of how those benefits came about.

**Click here to register:** <https://secure.ngpvan.com/PHUYDRowTU-9PviDVcalDw2>