

October 20, 2021

Legislative Pension Task Force – Interim Report Released:

[The Pension Benefits, Design, and Funding Task Force has issued its Interim Report](#)— the final report will be issued in December. This interim report focuses on the work of the Task Force so far, and identifies their planned work over the next few months. Remember, you're represented by six union members – three from Vermont-NEA, two from VSEA, and one from the Vermont Troopers Association – on the 12-person panel.

Some highlights:

- The Task Force has agreed to guide its **work according to several principles**, including honoring State commitments to employees, pension system sustainability, affordability to taxpayers, minimizing impacts of any changes to employees who are near retirement, making no changes to already retired employees, and ensuring that employees don't have to work longer to qualify for a benefit, among others.
- The report discusses the **factors that led to pension systems' unfunded liabilities**, including underfunding by the State in the Teachers' system; the Great Recession; an aging workforce; rates of return that were lower than projections; and funding teacher health benefits by raiding the Teachers' pension fund, among other factors.
- The Task Force acknowledges that **prefunding health benefits for public employees would save the State money in the long run**.
- Members of the Task Force agreed to have the State's **actuaries analyze several hypothetical scenarios**, including the impact of both one-time and recurring revenue injected into the pension systems, the impact of changes to contribution rates and the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) formulas, and the contributions that would be necessary for employees in the Department of Corrections to receive a retirement benefit like that received by sworn law enforcement officers, among other issues.

The Task Force identified its focus in the weeks to come, which includes holding a public hearing with members like you on November 1. [You can read the full interim report here.](#)

Did you miss the Pension Telephone Townhall on Monday Oct. 18?

On Monday October 18th your representatives to the Legislatures Pension Task Force – Molly Stoner, Kate McCann and Andrew Emrich – were joined by over 1000 fellow Vermont-NEA members to get an updated about the work of the task force. If you missed Monday nights call you can read the letter from Kate, Andrew and Molly in September here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wQpO9XlyS-xaGcyFOUa4HJpiXSg1Omsy/view?usp=sharing>

Pension Public Hearing (Virtual) – Sign-up in Live – Monday Nov. 1, 5:30-8:30pm

On Monday November 1 from 5:30-8:30pm the Legislative Pension Benefits, Design and Funding Task Force will hold a virtual public hearing. Your voice - along with that of state employees and state troopers - will be valuable as the Task Force continues their work. Your Vermont-NEA representatives on the Task Force - Molly Stoner, Kate McCann and Andrew Emrich - want to make sure their fellow **legislative task force members understand the challenges teachers are facing and the value the pension has on attracting and retaining high-quality teachers.**

Interested in testifying? Sign up here: <https://legislature.vermont.gov/links/pension-benefits-design-and-funding-public-hearing>

Interested in submitting written comments? Send a Word or PDF document to: testimony@leg.state.vt.us