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# *The* VOICE

THE OFFICIAL NEWS BULLETIN OF THE TEXAS RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

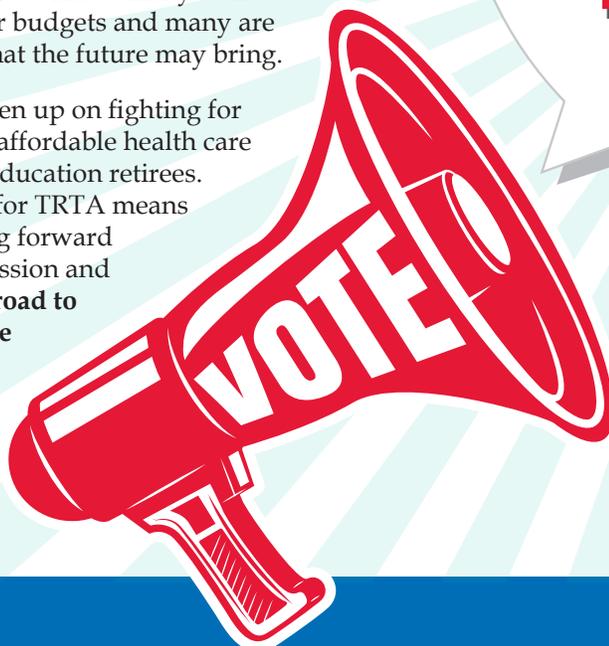
## NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT RIGHT NOW THAN VOTING!

**By Tim Lee**  
**Executive Director**

2018 began with many changes for Texas retired public educators. TRS-Care, the state-run health insurance for retired Texas educators, saw significant changes to its plan structure and premium rates in 2017. For many retirees, these changes mean significant increases in out-of-pocket costs to ensure the health care program stays solvent.

As the members of the Texas Retired Teachers Association (TRTA) know, change is constant. While the effects of health insurance changes remain to be seen, we know many retirees are adjusting their budgets and many are worried about what the future may bring.

TRTA has not given up on fighting for access to quality, affordable health care for Texas public education retirees. Constant change for TRTA means constantly moving forward with relentless passion and with a plan! **The road to influencing future policy outcomes starts now.**



# PRIMARY POWER

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# PRIMARY POWER: NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT RIGHT NOW THAN VOTING!

As we look ahead into 2018, we want members to know that nothing is more important right now than voting in the Primary Election! The Texas primaries are single-handedly the best way to influence change in retirement-related policies, like TRS-Care and cost-of-living benefits. Many retirees expressed disappointment over the changes to TRS-Care that occurred during the 2017 Texas legislative sessions.

Most elections in Texas are decided during the primary election cycle, though far fewer voters arrive at the polls to cast their decisive votes.

As you may have read in the last issue of *The VOICE*, there will be significant changes in Texas leadership by the time the 86th Legislative Session begins in January 2019. Speaker of the House Joe Straus already has announced his intention not to seek office again, meaning for the first time in almost a decade there will be a new speaker at the helm. Multiple Texas Representatives, including many friends of TRTA, are choosing not to run for reelection or will face challengers in the Primary Election.

Some candidates running for office may not know about the impact last session's changes to TRS-Care had on the well-being of retirees, financially and otherwise. They may not understand the tremendous value of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) defined benefit plan. In truth, many people seeking elected office may not have the information they need to truly assess what priorities must be addressed and how to go about addressing them.

TRTA members **MUST** take the time during this crucial primary election cycle to learn how the candidates will approach our issues, address our concerns, and ultimately work with us on our legislative agenda.

With educators, the role they have filled professionally often follows

them into retirement: they continue to educate. For the many advocates who are members of TRTA, this means educating candidates and elected officials about the issues that impact retired Texas educators' financial security. We ask that our TRTA members step into the role of educator once again!



## 1. Make a Plan to Vote Early, Take Your Friends and Family!

Begin making your plan now to vote early. Early voting begins Tuesday, February 20, 2018 and continues through Friday, March 2, 2018.

Consider creating a carpool schedule through your local unit so that you and fellow TRTA members can get to the polls ahead of the crowds. Lines can be much longer on election day (March 6, 2018), so getting ahead of the curve can save you time and spare you a lengthy wait.

Remember, **YOU ARE A LEADER!** When you vote in the primary election, you are increasing your influence and ensuring the power of retirees in the legislative process. The more people who vote, the more power we wield in the legislative process. You can grow that power and influence by getting all your friends, family, and fellow TRTA members to vote in the primary!

## 2. Begin Researching Candidates

As our members know, TRTA does not endorse candidates for political office. We do, however, encourage our members to get to know their candidates. A great way for you to interact with candidates and learn more about where they stand on retirement and education issues is to visit them at the local level. TRTA features more than 250 local units across the state that meet regularly, often inviting candidates to participate in forums at their monthly meetings.

Visit [www.trta.org](http://www.trta.org) to find a local unit near you today! You can also view the TRTA calendar on our website ([www.trta.org](http://www.trta.org)) to see a comprehensive schedule of local unit events.

TRTA also works with Texas Educators Vote to help promote a culture of voting in all Texas schools. Their website, [www.texaseducatorsvote.com](http://www.texaseducatorsvote.com), has many valuable resources to help educate voters about issues and candidates. We also recommend [www.teachthevote.org](http://www.teachthevote.org) to compare information about candidates running for office and where they stand on public education issues. We urge you to review these sites over the next couple of months.

To find a comprehensive list of all candidates running for statewide office in Texas, please visit the Texas Tribune website: <https://apps.texastribune.org/2018-texas-primary-candidates>.

## 3. Talking to Candidates: Questions to Ask

It's vital that all educators, retired and active, vote in the upcoming Primary Elections! The best way to defend and improve retirement benefits for Texas educators is to elect state officials who support the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) defined benefit plan and access to quality, affordable health care! Talk to candidates in your area **TODAY**, and ask them these important questions.

## **TRS–Care Health Insurance Program**

During the 85th legislative session, TRS–Care faced a budget shortfall of \$1 billion. This is not the first time TRS–Care has had significant funding problems. Funding for TRS–Care is based on aggregate teacher payroll and does not match up with growing health care costs and trends. This funding mechanism is broken, but it has not received a permanent fix. **If elected, what will you do to fix the funding mechanism for TRS–Care?**

Legislators have provided supplemental funds to TRS–Care over the past several sessions to make up some of the program’s large budget shortfalls. While supplemental funds to aid TRS–Care are welcome, those funds do not become part of the program’s base budget. **If elected, will you work to increase the program’s permanent base funding? If so, how much additional base funding would you suggest to stabilize the TRS–Care plan?**

Recently, TRS–Care underwent sweeping changes that dramatically increased out-of-pocket costs for retirees and their dependents living on fixed incomes. **If elected, will you work to permanently increase funding for TRS–Care so that retired school employees have access to affordable, quality healthcare?**

Some retirees and/or dependents may have left TRS–Care out of fear or the need to find a lower cost plan. **If elected, will you support legislation allowing anyone who may have left TRS–Care in FY 2018-2019 an opportunity to re-enroll?**

As changes were being made to TRS–Care, many retirees reported feeling upset about increases in health care costs and confused about processes such as enrollment. **If elected, will you support legislation that adds a TRS ombudsman as a full-time TRS employee to represent retiree interests?**

Health plans for both retired and active educators have been plagued with inadequate funding problems for years. **If elected, how do you propose fixing the TRS–ActiveCare problem? If elected, would you consider a plan that combines TRS–Care and TRS–ActiveCare? Why or why not?**

The Employees Retirement System (ERS) health care plan is fully funded by the Legislature, but TRS–Care continues to be impaired. We have heard that placing TRS retirees into ERS health care is too costly to be implemented. However, education retirees pay for 50 percent of the total cost of their healthcare through deductibles, premiums, and copays, etc. The Legislature appropriates \$600-\$900 per month for a retired state employee’s health care and only 1/3 of that amount for a retired school employee’s health care.

*Continued on page 4*

**The best way to defend and improve retirement benefits for Texas educators is to elect state officials who support the TRS defined benefit plan and access to quality, affordable health care!**



# PRIMARY POWER: NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT RIGHT NOW THAN VOTING!

**If elected, what will you do to fix this funding imbalance? If you cannot fix the funding imbalance, will you support legislation that moves TRS retirees into the ERS healthcare plan?**

Some legislators have suggested that the biggest problem with TRS-Care is that their colleagues simply do not understand the difficulty these changes have put on retirees. Drastic action has been suggested by various legislators, and that action would impact the elected class by moving them out of the state ERS health plan and into TRS-Care or TRS-ActiveCare. **If elected, would you support a bill that moves the elected class out of ERS health care and into TRS-Care?**

## **Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) Pension Fund**

Some organizations and individuals have been pushing to change the TRS defined benefit plan to a defined contribution plan. However, 95 percent of school employees in Texas do not pay into Social Security, meaning their TRS annuity is their only source of retirement income. **If elected, will you support keeping the defined benefit plan for all current and future school retirees?**

The Legislature recently put pressure on TRS to change their assumed rate

of return on investments. This was not accompanied by a plan to make up for long-term investment losses. **If elected, will you support increasing the state contribution to the pension fund to offset losses that may occur by changing the rate of return? If elected, what will you do to ensure the fund becomes actuarially sound?**

Many TRS annuitants have not received a pension increase since retiring. In 2013, approximately 200,000 retirees received a 3 percent cost-of-living raise if they retired before September 1, 2004. **If elected, will you support legislation to provide retirees who retired as of September 1, 2004 or after to receive a benefit increase next legislative session?**

Presently, pension increases for legislators are tied to salary increases for district judges. **If elected, will you support legislation that decouples this procedure? If elected, will you support legislation that allows legislators to receive pension increases only if TRS retirees also receive a pension increase?**

The Legislature's contributions per state employee far exceeds contributions per retired school employee. The state pays a higher

percentage of payroll for state employees' retirement, the full cost of Social Security, and highly subsidizes health care coverage for active employees and provides free health care coverage for retirees. This gives the impression that the service of state

employees, including elected officials, is more valuable than the service of educators. **If elected, what would you do to improve benefits for retired and active educators?**

After discussing the issues that affect Texas retired school personnel and better understanding how retirees are impacted, **if elected, would you be willing not only to support but also to introduce legislation to improve benefits for retired educators?**

Bonus question for congressional office seekers: There are many seats open for Texas congressional members as well. Be sure to ask those seeking a role in Congress if they will support TRTA in our efforts to repeal the unfair and discriminatory Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO)! Ask your candidates if retirees will be able to count on them to meet with us and work for TRTA members while they serve in Congress!

## **Thank You**

TRTA members, thank you for your support, dedication, and hard work. Please know that there is nothing more important to our efforts next legislative session than electing Senators and Representatives to the Texas Legislature who want to work for you and your issues.

We have many friends in office already. Work to get them re-elected! Many others are seeking office and want to know more about how to earn your vote. **NOW IS THE TIME TO TELL THEM WHAT YOU EXPECT, AND THEN FOLLOW THROUGH AND VOTE!**

If you want better retirement security and improved healthcare benefits, don't wait until the start of the legislative session to see if your newly elected legislator will work for you and your issues. **SEND SOMEONE TO AUSTIN WHO KNOWS THEY ARE ON A MISSION FOR YOU! ★**



**95% of school employees in Texas do not pay into Social Security.**

## ★ PRESIDENT'S LINE



### 1953-2018 TRTA – 65 years: Preserving the Past; Securing the Future

As TRTA's 65th year comes to an end, let's take a minute to reflect on what our organization has achieved. Are we where most of us would like to be? Absolutely not, but we can feel good about the giant steps that have been made that let us enjoy the benefits we have today. Now, it is up to each of us to continue donating our time and talents so that those coming behind us have the same opportunities.

We can look back at the past year and know retirees are continuing to support TRTA through their dedication to our local units! Even though this past year has been a difficult one for retirees, our membership has reached an all-time high! That was no accident: it was achieved through YOUR dedication. YOU are a member who works for the benefit of all retirees and future retirees!

Now we turn toward the Primary Election, a time for us to research all candidates on the ballot. If they have served on school boards and city councils, check out their voting records on issues important to retirees. We must be willing to vote for candidates, regardless of party, that have shown through their work or public service that they will stand up for their beliefs.

This will be my last article as your TRTA President! Believe me when I say it has been a great two years! I've had the opportunity to work with a great Board of Directors, state committees, Tim Lee, and a super staff. No words can describe how I feel about these TRTA members! Most of all, it has been YOU - the local units filled with dedicated, giving, fun members! YOU are the foundation of our great organization!

So, THANK YOU! I will continue to work for TRTA, just in a different office!

Nancy Byler  
2016-2018 TRTA President

## The One Checkup You Don't Have to Worry About — Your Benefits Checkup!



Do you have questions about long-term care, choosing the right Medicare supplement plan, or how to get dental and vision coverage? No problem, we're here to help! Call today to schedule your free, no obligation benefits checkup.

**Call today!**  
**800.258.7041**

Benefits made available through  AMBA

# TRTA 65th Annual Convention News!

TRTA members are in for a distinctive experience at the 65th Annual TRTA Convention! The convention will be held April 8–10, 2018 at the La Cantera Resort and Spa, located at 16641 La Cantera Parkway in San Antonio.



SweetFire Kitchen at La Cantera Resort and Spa

San Antonio will celebrate its 300th anniversary in 2018! This year’s convention celebrates TRTA’s 65th year of expert advocacy and fighting for improved benefits for Texas retired educators! Preserving the Past, Securing the Future is this year’s convention theme, and TRTA has several unique experiences available for attendees that you won’t want to miss!

La Cantera sits atop the highest point in San Antonio, overlooking breathtaking rolling hills in the Texas Hill Country. The resort features two swimming pools, two championship eighteen-hole world-class golf courses, and a luxurious spa offering massages, facials, and sanctuary. A complimentary shuttle providing service to and from the nearby shops and theme parks is also available.

The convention hotel is now full. TRTA has booked the Drury Inn & Suites San Antonio as the overflow hotel, located at 9806 I-10 W, San Antonio, TX 78230. To make reservations and obtain the TRTA discount, visit [www.trta.org](http://www.trta.org) or call 1.800.325.0720 and refer to group number of 2331922. The last day to make reservations is March 8. A shuttle service will be available from the Drury to La Cantera.

All attendees are required to register for the convention. Meal functions require the purchase of a separate ticket, and seating will be reserved according to TRTA district. You may register for the convention online by visiting [www.trta.org](http://www.trta.org) or by completing page 8.

The convention starts on Sunday, April 8, with registration opening at 11:00 a.m., allowing members time to

travel to San Antonio before activities begin. While there are several meetings occurring this day, most members will look forward to the evening when the Welcome Reception is held at 6:30 p.m. Enjoy browsing the exhibits and hearing a local mariachi band for this free “Sip and Shop” event! Attendees may choose from a variety of nearby restaurants for dinner, including five inside the hotel.

Monday, April 9 begins with the first annual Texas Retired Teachers Foundation (TRTF) fundraising golf tournament at the Palmer Golf Course adjacent to La Cantera. Registration opens at 7:00 a.m., with a shotgun start at 8:00 a.m. Learn more about the tournament and how to purchase tickets on page 9, or visit [www.trtf.org/golftournament](http://www.trtf.org/golftournament).

Opening Ceremonies begin at 8:30 a.m. with a welcome from San Antonio’s District 4 city Councilman Rey Saldaña, followed by informational sessions at 10:30 a.m. This year’s informational sessions include Understanding Nonverbal Communication with Jan Hargraves, Master Gardeners, Texas Historian, and Tricentennial with curator and Antique Roadshow appraiser Bruce Shackelford.

A relaxed, festive lunch follows at 12:45 p.m., featuring motivational guest speaker Dr. Greg Gibson, TRS Trustee and Superintendent of the Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD. The menu features chicken Caesar salad, breadsticks, and Texas tiramisu.

*Continued on next page*

## Convention Schedule

### SUNDAY, APRIL 8, 2018

- 10:00 a.m.  
TRTA Officers Meeting
- 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.  
Registration/Delegate Certification
- 11:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.  
Exhibits
- 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.  
TRTA Board of Directors Meeting
- 12:45 – 1:45 p.m.  
Foundation Board of Trustees Meeting
- 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.  
District Presidents Meeting
- 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.  
District 1–10 Caucus Meetings
- 4:45 – 5:45 p.m.  
District 11–20 Caucus Meetings
- 6:30 p.m.  
Welcome Reception

### MONDAY, APRIL 9, 2018

- 7:30 – 8:00 a.m.  
Facilitators Meeting
- 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Registration/Delegate Certification
- 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Exhibits
- 8:30 – 10:00 a.m.  
Opening Ceremonies
- 10:30 – 11:15 a.m.  
Informational Sessions
- 11:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.  
Breakout Session I
- 12:45 – 1:45 p.m.  
La Cantera Luncheon
- 2:00 – 2:45 p.m.  
Breakout Session II
- 3:15 – 4:00 p.m.  
Breakout Session III
- 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.  
Social Hour
- 6:30 p.m.  
Big Band Sound Gala

### TUESDAY, APRIL 10, 2018

- 7:00 – 8:00 a.m.  
Registration/Delegate Certification
- 7:30 – 8:30 a.m.  
Stilwell Breakfast
- 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
First House of Delegates
- 12:15 – 1:15 p.m.  
Foundation Luncheon
- 1:30 p.m. – TBA  
Second House of Delegates
- TBA – Board of Directors Meeting

## TRTA 65th Annual Convention News! continued from page 6.

Training sessions for local officer counterparts start at 11:45 a.m. and continue through 4:00 p.m. At 5:30 p.m., attendees can enjoy a social hour on the San Antonio Ballroom outdoor terrace, followed by a formal gala event where the E.L. Galyean Service Award recipient will be announced. The gala will feature a dance floor and live music by big band group the Lamplighters. TRTA encourages attendees to dress to the nines! The gala dinner includes seasoned pork tenderloin, sweet potatoes with brown butter puree, seasonal vegetables and chocolate banana custard cake for dessert.

Tuesday, April 10 starts with the Stilwell Breakfast at 7:30 a.m. Attendees may dine on scrambled eggs, potatoes, bacon, as well as muffins and croissants for \$35. April 10 continues with a full day of association business, with the First House of Delegates beginning at 9:00 a.m. The TRTF annual fundraising luncheon begins at 12:15 p.m. View the menu on page 15.

After lunch, attendees will return for the Second House of Delegates at 1:30 p.m. The convention will conclude after association business, such as the election of state officers for 2018-2020, discussion of bylaws amendments, and the announcement of the President's Diamond Award. The President's Diamond Award is given at the end of a reigning TRTA President's term to honor a local unit that uses unique methods to maintain and grow their membership.

We hope you will join TRTA as we come together discuss ways to advocate for the future while preserving all the benefits we have earned in the past! ✪

### TRTA Officer Candidates for 2018-2020

The following members have filed and are eligible candidates running for 2018-2020 TRTA State office. The nominees will be elected by the TRTA House of Delegates during the upcoming TRTA Convention in San Antonio on April 10, 2018.

#### Patricia Macias, For President

Currently serving as the 2016-2018 State First Vice-President and State Membership Committee Chair. Served as the 2014-2016 State Second Vice-President and State Public Relations Committee Chair. Served as the State Member Benefits Committee Chair (2010-2014), District 2 Member Benefits Committee Chair (2011-2014), Tri-County RTA President (2011-2012) and Tri-County RTA Member Benefits Committee Chair (2010-2014).

#### Leroy DeHaven, For First Vice-President

Currently serving as the 2016-2018 State Second Vice-President and State Public Relations Committee Chair. Served as the 2014-2016 State Secretary/Treasurer. Served as the District Presidents Council Vice-Chair (2012-2014), District 2 President (2012-2014), State Legislative Committee (8 years), District 2 Legislative Chair (8 years). Served as the Corpus Christi Area RTA President (2007-2011) and Legislative Committee Chair (2007-2016).

#### Marcy Cann, For Second Vice-President

Currently serving as the 2016-2018 State Secretary/Treasurer and State Finance Committee Chair and District 4 Immediate Past President (2016-2018). Served as the District Presidents Council Chair (2014-2016), State Legislative Committee Member (2009-2016) and District 4 President (2014-2016), District 4 Legislative Committee member (2007-2014), Houston ART First Vice-President (2012-2013), District 4 Legislative Chair (2010-2013), Houston ART Legislative Chair (2009-2010), Houston ART Immediate Past President (2008-2009) and Houston ART President (2007-2008).

#### Ella Gauthier, For State Secretary/Treasurer

Currently serving as 2016-2018 District Presidents Council Vice-Chair and District 4 President. Served as the District 4 Parliamentarian (2013-2016), District 4 Treasurer (2011-2013), Pasadena Area RSE President (2009-2011), Pasadena Area RSE First Vice-President (2007-2009) and Pasadena Area RSE Secretary (2005-2007).

#### Earl Wall, For State Secretary/Treasurer

Currently serving as 2017-2018 District Presidents Council Recorder, District 12 President and the State Local Unit Support Committee member (2015-2018). Served as the Mills County RTA President (2014-2015), District 12 Legislative Chair (2014-2016) and Johnson County RTA Legislative Chair (2010-2014).



Patricia Macias



Leroy DeHaven



Marcy Cann



Ella Gauthier



Earl Wall



# Preserving the Past; Securing the Future

LA CANTERA RESORT AND SPA • SAN ANTONIO APRIL 8-10, 2018

## CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM

ONLINE REGISTRATION OPEN: DECEMBER 11, 2017 • REGISTRATION DEADLINE: MARCH 19, 2018

### REGISTRANT INFORMATION

Last and First Name		TRTA ID
Address		
City	State	Zip
Phone	Email for Confirmation	
In Case of On-Site Emergency Contact		Cell Phone

### CONVENTION INFORMATION

Every convention attendee must register online or by mail. One registrant per form. Please check all boxes that apply. Attendees must pay the \$40 registration fee or \$45 on-site registration (late) fee. Refund requests must be received by April 1, 2018. Refunds will be processed after Convention by April 23, 2018. A \$10 service charge will apply. Register online at [www.trta.org](http://www.trta.org) or mail completed form and payment to TRTA, Attention: Convention, 313 E. 12th Street, Suite 200, Austin, TX 78701.

### SPECIAL EVENTS

<input type="checkbox"/> Registration (Deadline March 19, 2018) \$40 per person	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> La Cantera Luncheon (Monday, April 9, 2018 • 12:45 – 1:45 p.m.) \$40 per person	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Big Band Sound Gala (Monday, April 9, 2018 • 6:30 p.m.) \$55 per person	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Stilwell Breakfast (Tuesday, April 10, 2018 • 7:30 – 8:30 a.m.) \$35 per person	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Foundation Luncheon (Tuesday, April 10, 2018 • 12:15 – 1:15 p.m.) \$45 per person	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Welcome Reception (Sunday, April 8, 2018 • 6:30 p.m.) Complimentary	
<input type="checkbox"/> I will be attending the Welcome Reception	

### PAYMENT INFORMATION

A confirmation letter will be emailed/mailed prior to convention.	<b>TOTAL REMITTANCE</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Check or money order enclosed payable to TRTA	
<input type="checkbox"/> Please charge my credit card	

▼ Credit Card Number ▼ Expiration

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	-	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	-	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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▼ Signature \_\_\_\_\_



## SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

**Golf Ball Sponsor \$3500**

Includes four players, company logo on golf balls, one sleeve of golf balls per player and website recognition.

**Gold Sponsor \$2500**

Includes four players, website recognition, signage at one of the 18 holes or tee box, presented a plaque at the awards ceremony.

**Silver Sponsor \$1000**

Includes two players, website recognition, signage at one of the 18 holes or tee box.

**Bronze Sponsor \$500**

Includes two players and signage at one of the 18 holes or tee box.

**Hole Sponsor \$150**

Signage at one of the 18 holes or tee box.

**TEXAS RETIRED TEACHERS FOUNDATION**

**GOLF**

**TOURNAMENT 2018**

**Monday, April 9 • Palmer Golf Course • San Antonio**

Registration at 7 a.m. and shotgun start at 8 a.m.

Awards ceremony following tournament

Includes breakfast, a box lunch, swag bag, range balls, green fee and cart

Prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place, closest to the pin and longest drive

**Registration fee \$125 (10% off for first 30 players, code TENOFF)**

**Raffle tickets \$10 and mulligans \$5**

**Register at [www.trtf.org/golftournament](http://www.trtf.org/golftournament)**

**Golf tournament registration deadline: March 19, 2018**

# PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE TRTA BYLAWS

If adopted, the indication of change for each amendment is deleting content by striking through and/or adding content by underlining.

## **PROPOSED AMENDMENT 1**

If adopted, any school personnel or beneficiary who is a participant (as a current member or retirement recipient) in a teacher retirement system and has reached the age of 50 years old may become a member of TRTA upon payment of dues, either through a Local Unit or directly to TRTA.

### **Article IV: Members**

#### **Section 1**

Any ~~retired~~ school personnel or beneficiary who is ~~an annuitant from a~~ participant (as a current member or retirement recipient) in a teacher retirement system and has reached the age of 50 years old may become a member of TRTA upon payment of dues, either through a Local Unit or directly to TRTA.

Maker: District VII

Contact Individual: Linda Metteauer and Glenna Santo

Maker's Rationale: Retirement issues are career-long concerns and benefits need to be carefully guarded throughout one's entire lifetime. One of TRTA's purposes is to protect, promote, and defend the interests of all TRS members. Current Bylaws restrict membership in TRTA to less than 30% of the TRS members. Expanding TRTA's membership base will result in a stronger influence with the Texas Legislature. Most importantly, TRS has instituted age restrictions on current members which will limit the potential number of new members available to join TRTA in the upcoming years and could lead to a future decline in membership for TRTA.

OAC Recommends: Opposition.

OAC Rationale: Article IV, Section 2 of the current TRTA Bylaws establishes associate membership for individuals without regard to age. Therefore, the Bylaws already allow active school employees to join TRTA. As written, the amendment would establish age as an eligibility criterion rather than one's employment status and exclude those under the age of 50 from joining.

Board of Directors Recommends: Opposition.

Board of Directors Rationale: TRTA is an organization that specifically represents educator retirement issues. The TRTA Bylaws state our purpose is to preserve and maintain the Teacher Retirement System of Texas. There are numerous organizations that advocate for active public school employees. The proposed amendment has the potential to create competition between those associations and TRTA in membership recruitment. It is the Board's position that the current TRTA membership category of Associate Member accommodates the intention of the proposed amendment without diluting TRTA's purpose or creating competition, thus making the amendment unnecessary.

## **PROPOSED AMENDMENT 2**

If adopted, annual dues of Active Members shall be thirty-five dollars (\$35), three dollars (\$3) of which shall be rebated to the respective TRTA District. Annual dues of Associate Members shall be ten dollars (\$10) of which none shall be rebated to the respective District.

### **Article IV: Members**

#### **Section 4**

Annual dues of ~~both Active Members and Associate Members~~ shall be thirty-five dollars (\$35.00), three dollars (\$3.00) of which shall be rebated to the respective TRTA District. Annual dues of Associate Members shall be ten dollars (\$10) of which none shall be rebated to the respective District.

Maker: Copperas Cove Retired Teachers Association

Contact Individual: John F. Gallen

Maker's Rationale: With the push to increase membership and get active teachers to join TRTA where their benefits of joining are limited with no right to vote or hold office the incentive to join TRTA is not high, even though TRTA fights for active teachers as well as retired teachers. If these dues are reduced to \$10 for Associate members we could recruit a larger number of members to add to our voting block in elections. When they eventually retire they would be more likely to become full members of TRTA at \$35 rate. This would also help the districts and their units in the recruiting efforts to increase membership.

OAC Recommends: Opposition.

OAC Rationale: TRTA currently has approximately 3084 associate members (3.7% of the total TRTA membership). Reducing the dues of associate members to \$10 would have a negative financial impact of approximately \$77,100 on TRTA income. Replacing this loss would require an additional 7710 new associate members plus retention of the current 3084 associate members. Such a reduction in income would have far-reaching impact on various aspects of the budget.

Board of Directors Recommends: Opposition.

Board of Directors Rationale: BOD agrees with the rationale of the OAC.

# PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE TRTA BYLAWS

## **PROPOSED AMENDMENT 3**

If adopted, District Legislative Chair may serve as an optional and sixth delegate for a District. A District has the option to fund the expenses of the District Legislative Chair.

### **Article VI: House of Delegates**

#### **Section 1**

6. District Legislative Chair may serve as an optional and sixth delegate for a District. A District has the option to fund the expenses of the District Legislative Chair.

Maker: District 19

Contact Individual: Ron Leiman

Maker's Rationale: The District Legislative Chair serves an important capacity at the District level and should attend/participate as a voting delegate at the state convention. At the same time a District should not be compelled to fund the expenses of this individual. The concept of having the District Legislative Chair attend and participate in the state convention was discussed at the District Presidents Conference in July 2017.

OAC Recommends: Opposition.

OAC Rationale: The number of delegates (5) from Districts authorized by the Bylaws is considered a sufficient number of delegates to represent the interests of the district without unduly impacting representation from local units. The district may substitute the Legislative Chair as a district delegate through the provision allowing alternates for the district officers named in the Bylaws.

Board of Directors Recommends: Opposition.

Board of Directors Rationale: BOD agrees with the rationale of the OAC.

## **PROPOSED AMENDMENT 4**

If adopted, Representatives from the District Presidents Council shall be the current District Presidents Council Chair, Vice-Chair and Recorder.

### **Article VII: Officers of the Organization**

#### **Section 2**

3. Representatives from the District Presidents Council shall be current District Presidents the current District Presidents Council Chair, Vice-Chair, and Recorder.

Maker: District 10

Contact Individual: Thalia F. Matherson, President

Maker's Rationale: All District Presidents do not serve on the Board of TRTA; therefore, the proposed strikes and additions seem to correct and accurately name those that serve on the TRTA Board of Directors from the District Presidents Council Chair, Vice-Chair and Recorder.

OAC Recommends: Approval.

OAC Rationale: The wording of the current Bylaws allows for some ambiguity between Section 1 and Section 2. The amendment aligns Section 2 with the specification established by Section 1 and thereby eliminates any possible confusion.

Board of Directors Recommends: Approval.

Board of Directors Rationale: BOD agrees with the rationale of the OAC.

## **PROPOSED AMENDMENT 5**

If adopted, any member of TRTA may file or submit his/her name for a TRTA elected office. Applicants should submit their candidate filing form to the TRTA office for verification of the qualifications for office as stated in Article VII of the Bylaws. The Immediate Past President shall submit to the House of Delegate the names of all nominees meeting the qualifications of the office for which he/she has filed.

### **Article VIII: Nominations, Elections, and Installations**

#### **Section 1**

The Nominating Committee shall be constituted and shall act in the following manner:

1. The Nominating Committee shall consist of a Chair, who shall be the Immediate Past President of TRTA, and four (4) members. Each of the five (5) members shall be from a different TRTA District. Nominations to serve on this Committee shall come from the floor at the House of Delegates, and nominees shall be given the opportunity to decline or consent to this nomination. Secret ballot shall determine election for a term of two (2) years, with no subsequent consecutive term. If only four (4) members are nominated, a voice vote may be taken. If there are more than four (4) nominees, then the four nominees with the most number of votes shall be elected. If there is a tie in the fourth position, the tellers committee shall draw by lot to break the tie and determine the fourth position. The Board of Directors shall fill any vacancy on the

# PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE TRTA BYLAWS

Nominating Committee with a TRTA member from the same District as the member vacating the seat on the Committee.

2. Any member of TRTA may submit to the Nominating Committee names of prospective nominees for TRTA elected office. The Committee shall submit to the House of Delegates the names of those members whom the Committee deems qualified to serve. Each nominee shall be given the opportunity to decline or to consent for his or her name to be placed in nomination for state office.

1. Any member of TRTA may file or submit his/her name for a TRTA elected office. Applicants should submit their candidate filing form to the TRTA office for verification of the qualifications for office as stated in Article VII of the Bylaws. The Immediate Past President shall submit to the House of Delegate the names of all nominees meeting the qualifications of the office for which he/she has filed.

Maker: District 2

Contact Individual: Paula Stone, President

Maker's Rationale: Current Bylaws describe more of a process than a nomination committee. We already have a self-nomination process to place names on the ballot. Currently the nominating committee simply determines if those nominated meet the required qualifications. This change would keep a policy of open or self-nomination which we already have, but it would establish a process to check the qualifications of nominees and submit a report to the House of Delegates. This would eliminate the time-consuming election of a nominating committee that we now have and improve the efficient use of time in the House of Delegates.

OAC Recommends: Approval.

OAC Rationale: The amendment clarifies TRTA's use of an open filing process and assigns administrative responsibility for ensuring eligibility of candidates. The amendment emphasizes an open process in the election of association leaders.

Board of Directors Recommends: Approval.

Board of Directors Rationale: BOD agrees with the rationale of the OAC.

## **PROPOSED AMENDMENT 6**

If adopted, the standing committees of TRTA shall be Community Volunteer Service, Finance, Healthy Living, Informative and Protective Services, Leadership Support, Legislative, Local Unit Support, Member Benefits, Membership, Organizational Affairs, Public Relations, and Retirement Education.

### **Article XI: Committees**

#### **Section 1**

The standing committees of TRTA shall be Community Volunteer Service, Finance, ~~Health Care~~ Healthy Living, Informative and Protective Services, Leadership Support, Legislative, Local Unit Support, Member Benefits, Membership, Organizational Affairs, Public Relations, and Retirement Education.

Maker: District 11

Contact Individual: Frana Patterson

Maker's Rationale: Healthy Living is a more accurate description of the function of the committee.

OAC Recommends: Approval.

OAC Rationale: The committee name established in the current Bylaws implies responsibilities that are not undertaken by the committee. The Organizational Affairs Committee concurs with the rationale submitted by District 11 that the proposed name for the committee more accurately reflects the work of the committee.

Board of Directors Recommends: Approval.

Board of Directors Rationale: BOD agrees with the rationale of the OAC.

# PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE TRTA BYLAWS

## PROPOSED AMENDMENT 7

If adopted, amend Article XV, by substituting the following for Sections 1 and 2.

### **Section 1**

Proposed bylaws amendments to be considered by the TRTA House of Delegates shall be submitted to the TRTA office by November 1. Proposed bylaw amendments may originate from:

1. A Local Unit;
2. A TRTA District;
3. The Board of Directors; or
4. The Organizational Affairs Committee, when authorized by the Board of Directors.

### **Section 2**

The Organizational Affairs Committee shall:

1. Study each submitted proposal and determine its potential impact on the operation of TRTA and other bylaws;
2. Edit and format the proposal with the approval of the author of the proposed amendment;
3. Recommend approval, disapproval, or continued study; and
4. Forward the proposal and the Committee's recommendation to the Board of Directors by January 1.

## **Article XV: Amendment of Bylaws**

### **Section 1**

Proposed bylaws amendments to be considered by the Organizational Affairs Committee shall be made through a Local Unit or a TRTA District and TRTA House of Delegates shall be submitted to the TRTA office by November 1. Proposed bylaw amendments may originate from:

1. A Local Unit;
2. A TRTA District;
3. The Board of Directors; or
4. The Organizational Affairs Committee, when authorized by the Board of Directors.

### **Section 2**

The Organizational Affairs Committee shall:

- ~~1. Be authorized to submit proposed bylaw amendments;~~
2. 1. Study the each submitted proposal and determine its potential impact on the operation of TRTA and other bylaws;
3. 2. Edit and format the proposal with the approval of the author of the ~~composition~~ proposed amendment;
4. 3. Recommend approval, disapproval, or continued study; and
5. 4. Forward the proposal and the Committee's recommendation to the Board of Directors by January 1.

Maker: Midland Association of Retired School Personnel

Contact Individual: Maridell Fryar

Maker's Rationale: This amendment is intended to clarify the intent of Article XV, Section 2, #1 which allows the OAC to submit amendments. This amendment separates the allowed sources of amendments from the designated process of the OAC in the processing of submitted amendments, thus avoiding any possible confusion about the OAC's involvement.

OAC Recommends: Approval.

OAC Rationale: The amendment removes confusion existing in current Bylaws language and clearly identifies the role of the Organizational Affairs Committee. The proposed language strengthens the amendment process by incorporating all levels of the organization, whereby the organization can identify needed organizational changes and propose solutions to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of TRTA.

Board of Directors Recommends: Approval.

Board of Directors Rationale: The proposed amendment removes confusion existing in current Bylaws language and clearly identifies the role of the Board of Directors and the Organizational Affairs Committee when amending the TRTA Bylaws. The amendment adds the Board of Directors and the Organizational Affairs Committee (when authorized by the Board of Directors) to submit Bylaws amendments for consideration by the House of Delegates. This creates an improved operating structure that ensures the Board's ability to address member concerns or organizational change. The process for discussion and consideration of any proposed Bylaw amendment remains unchanged with the House of Delegates having final authority on any proposal.

# New TRTA Website Launched

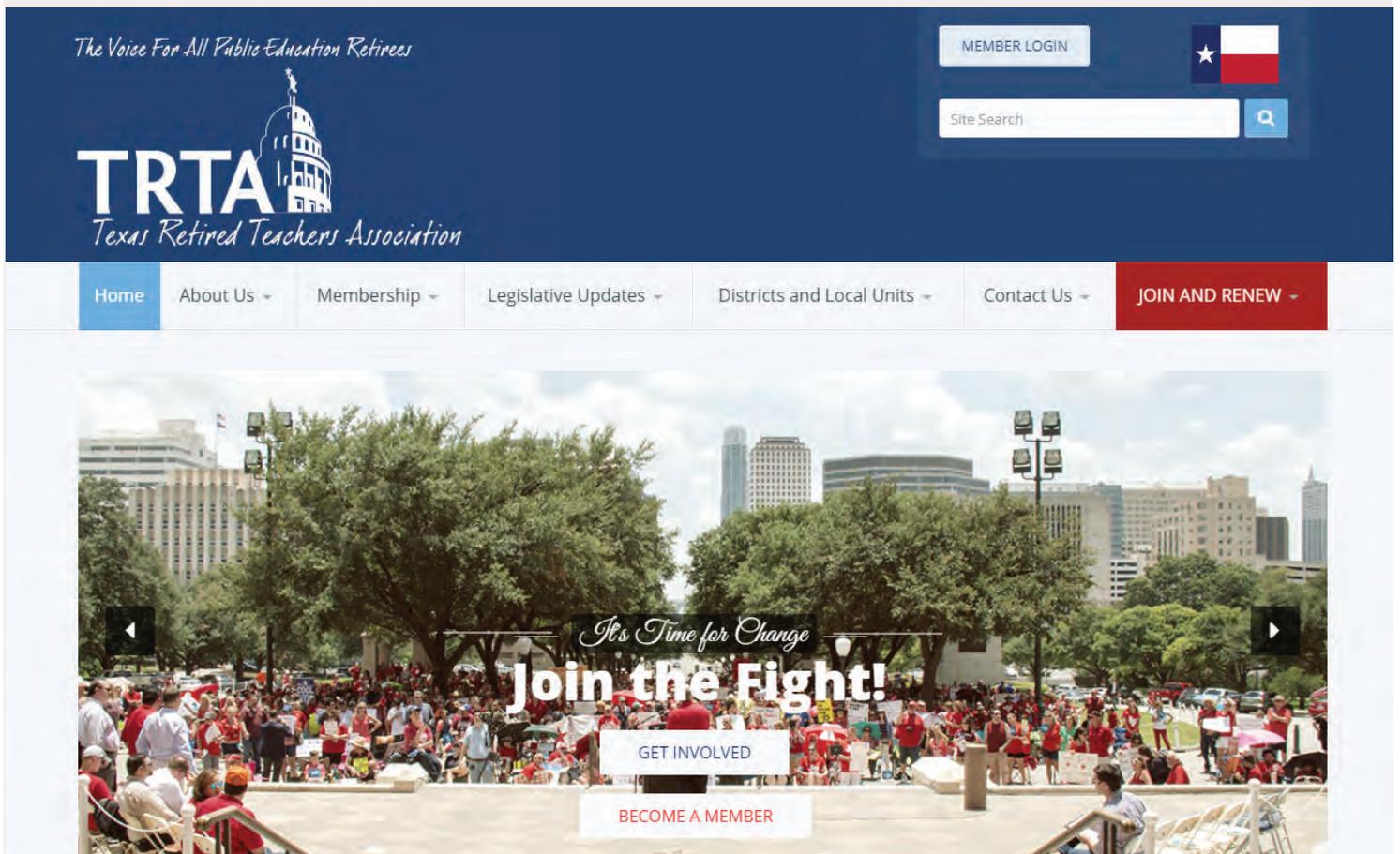
The Texas Retired Teachers Association (TRTA) has launched its newly redesigned website. You can still find us online at [www.trta.org](http://www.trta.org). One of the biggest features of the new website is its mobile compatibility, meaning that users will be more easily able to navigate the site using phones and tablets.

The site brings a fresh, exciting design to TRTA, and encourages member growth and engagement for both the state and local units. One of the new features on the site is an expansive calendar that includes local unit and district meetings. The meetings are currently listed up through May.

Another big change is the location of the TRTA member benefits. It is still possible to view what the benefits are under “Membership” and “Member Benefits,” but to access the benefits, members must use the “Member Login” feature. TRTA members who joined offline have a username that is their member ID number. The default TRTA member password is `trta123` (all lowercase). If you do not remember your username or password, you can use the “I don’t know my username or password” feature located under the member login. If you are still unable to find your username or password, you can email the TRTA membership department at [membership@trta.org](mailto:membership@trta.org).

For local unit officers, the TRTA forms have been moved under the “Membership tab” and are titled “Member Resources.” Similarly, the TRTA State Standing Committees are now located under “About Us.”

We look forward to having members enjoy the new site design and content. If you are interested further about the changes to the site, please visit [youtube.com/thetrtatv](http://youtube.com/thetrtatv) to view a tutorial about it. Be sure to send us your feedback about the site at [info@trta.org](mailto:info@trta.org). ★

This is a promotional banner for "Age Well Live Well". On the left, the text "Age Well Live Well" is written in a large, white, serif font. Below it, a red box contains the text "BE HEALTHY." in white. Underneath that, a quote reads: "Regular exercise and a healthy diet helps ensure I can do the things I enjoy." The right side of the banner features a photograph of a smiling, middle-aged Black man. To the right of the photo, on a dark blue background, is the text "Learn how to stay healthy and active at [www.AgeWellLiveWell.org](http://www.AgeWellLiveWell.org)". At the bottom right is the Texas Health and Human Services logo, which is a circular seal with a star in the center, and the text "Texas Health and Human Services" below it.

# OUTLOOK



## LEADING POSITIVE CHANGE FOR TEXAS EDUCATION

**FIRST ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT**  
Supporting TRTF's Charitable Programs  
15

**APPLICATIONS FOR SCHOLARSHIPS  
AND GRANTS ARE NOW AVAILABLE!**  
16

**DONATE TODAY!**  
Donation card on the back of *The VOICE*  
16

## TRTF PLANS EXCITING NEW EVENT AT TRTA ANNUAL CONVENTION!

The Texas Retired Teachers Foundation (TRTF) looks forward to the upcoming 65th Annual TRTA Convention in San Antonio, being held April 8-10, 2018.

For the first time in its history, TRTF will host a golf tournament to raise funds for its charitable programs! Held on the Palmer Golf Course adjacent to La Cantera Resort on April 9, 2018, the \$125 tickets include breakfast, a box lunch, swag bag, range balls, green fee and cart. Prizes will be awarded for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place, closest to the pin and longest drive. Registration begins at 7:00 a.m., and the shotgun start for the

four-person scramble begins at 8:00 a.m. Mulligans and raffle tickets will be available for purchase onsite.

TRTF is in need of sponsors for this first annual event! Please visit [www.trtf.org/golftournament](http://www.trtf.org/golftournament) to learn more about sponsorship opportunities or to register as a player. The first 30 players receive 10 percent off the ticket price by using the promo code TENOFF.

As in years past, TRTF will host a luncheon on April 10 at 12:15 p.m. The menu features crisp prosciutto chicken, mashed potatoes, and seasonal vegetables with vanilla strawberry cheesecake with whipped almond

cream for dessert. Tickets are \$45 per person and may be purchased when you submit your convention registration form (see page 8).

Our 30 Classroom Assistance Grant and 15 Beginning Teacher Scholarship recipients will be announced during the luncheon. The Foundation

will also provide an update for members about our Disaster Relief program, "A Helping Hand," the Legacy Campaign and the Lehr-Pritchard Endowment Fund.

It is common for individuals, districts and local units to present gifts to the Foundation in honor or in memory of someone at the end of the luncheon. If you are attending the luncheon and would like to make a donation, you may complete a form to include a personal message. Forms will be available on your table or in *The Ledger*, our monthly e-newsletter, and on the TRTF website ([www.trtf.org](http://www.trtf.org)).

TRTF will host a training session on April 9 at 2:00 p.m. in the San Lorenzo room on the third floor. It is recommended that Local Unit Foundation Representatives and District Foundation Liaisons join the session. Understanding the roles of Liaisons and Representatives, fundraising, and program implementation will be discussed. See you there!

Palmer Golf Course





# The VOICE

Send address changes to:  
Texas Retired Teachers Association  
313 E. 12th Street, Suite 200 | Austin, TX 78701-1957  
800.880.1650 | www.trta.org

## TRTF NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS!

TRTF Beginning Teacher Scholarship and Classroom Assistance Grant applications are now available! Visit [www.trtf.org](http://www.trtf.org) to download an application or send an email to [help@trtf.org](mailto:help@trtf.org). Applications are due March 15, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

TRTF will provide 15 \$750 Beginning Teacher Scholarships to recent college graduates who will be teaching for the first time in 2018. This is an increase from the 10 scholarships awarded in 2017 (the first 10 awards were given during the TRTA Convention in 2017). This program replaced the student scholarship program in 2017.

Beginning Teacher Scholarships reward students who have completed their college education by reimbursing them for certification tests and test results, and providing funds to help the applicant purchase materials for his or her classroom during his or her first year of teaching. Applicants must be related to a member of TRTA, have earned an undergraduate or master's degree in education and a teacher's certification by August 31, 2018, and must have taken or be scheduled to take the Texas teacher certification exam in 2018 in anticipation of beginning their teaching career during the fall of 2018 or spring of 2019.

We know many members of TRTA may have grandchildren who are about to enter the classroom as professional educators for the first time, and we encourage you to let them know about this wonderful opportunity to receive a financial boost for the first year of their career.

TRTF will provide 30 \$500 Classroom Assistance Grants to public school teachers in Texas in 2018. This is an increase from the 15 grants awarded in 2017!

Today's classroom teachers use a variety of tools to educate children, but due to lack of sufficient funding, many find new technology items out of reach. TRTF's Classroom Assistance Grant program helps teachers improve the learning environment for students by giving \$500 to current Texas educators who are implementing unique projects, learning platforms, software, and more into their classrooms. Since 2008, TRTF has provided \$63,500 in grants to active educators all across Texas.

If you know of a teacher who wants to help students develop real-world skills and provide them with a creative and innovative community to explore their future, please tell them to apply for our Classroom Assistance Grant program! You can read more about past recipients on our website at [www.trtf.org](http://www.trtf.org).

TEXAS RETIRED TEACHERS FOUNDATION

# OUTLOOK

LEADING POSITIVE CHANGE FOR TEXAS EDUCATION

TEXAS RETIRED TEACHERS FOUNDATION

 **I WANT TO HELP!**

**DONATION CARD**  
DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE

PLEASE ACCEPT MY DONATION OF:

\$25     \$50     \$100     \$ \_\_\_\_\_

IN MEMORY OF:

\_\_\_\_\_

IN HONOR OF:

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NAME

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CITY

STATE

ZIP

PHONE

SAVE TRTF A STAMP AND EMAIL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO:

Donations are tax deductible. Enclose a check, completed donation card and send to:  
Texas Retired Teachers Foundation • 313 E. 12th St., Ste. 200 • Austin, TX 78701-1957