

VRTA Legislative Goals for 2005 -2006

Our legislative agenda at this point is basically the same, although subject to revision, deletion or addition as circumstances dictate.

(1) Our main legislative thrust is to win fair treatment in the Health Insurance Credits. Currently other VRS members, such as State and VDOT (VA Dept. of Transportation) retirees with 30 years of service. receive \$120 per month while our retirees get only \$75.00.

No one has ever explained this gross inequity, or attempted to.

Originally the legislators promised that, although our pensions were low in comparison to others, they would never be taxed by the State. When a Supreme Court decision changed this, they created the HIC's to help make it up to us.

Today, faced with unprecedented rises in health insurance, health care and Rx drug prices, many older retirees must chose between buying food or medicine.

We join forces with the VEA in demanding parity with other VRS members and we are asking that these credits be extended to include non-teaching members of the school employees team.

(2) We are also seeking to raise the 30-year limit so a teacher who has served for more than 30 years can be paid for those years.

(3) Another important goal is to raise the "multiplier" (a factor use to calculate the amount of retirement pay) from 1.7% to 2.0% for current teachers, *with a comparable increase for those already retired.*

(4) We also believe the amount of our permanent group life insurance coverage should equal 100% of our final average salary. Currently it ends up at 50%, although we have been told that investment returns and cash reserves can easily support this increase.

(5) Finally, we are still trying to obtain some special relief for those of colleagues who retired years ago on a small percentage of a tiny salary. There are so few left that the cost would by minuscule in the overall state budget.

NONE OF THE ABOVE CAN BE DONE WITHOUT YOUR HELP!

Legislators tell me they are unaware of many of these facts. We are not asking you to lobby your legislators. We are asking you to educate them. Give them the facts and tell them our needs. I believe most will do the right thing.

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