



MRTA

Missouri Retired Teachers Association & Public School Personnel

The Legislature Can Giveth; The Legislature Can Taketh!

By Jim Kreider, MRTA Executive Director

Which activity is most effective in preventing the "taketh?" Check line below

- The World Is Run By Those Who Show Up!
- The Squeaky Wheel Gets The Grease!
- God Helps Those Who Help Themselves!
- All The Above

"...MRTA will work actively with government and its entities for beneficial legislation. We will strive to increase membership until all retirees become members..." (From MRTA's Mission Statement).

"This is the time to be preeminently honest, to speak the whole truth frankly and boldly nor need we shrink from honestly facing the conditions in our country (retirement system) today, our country (retirement system) will endure as it has endured and will revive and will prosper." Franklin Roosevelt.

The Legislature Can Giveth; The Legislature Can Taketh!

As we look forward to the work ahead in 2010, we must look back at the past year to see what your membership in MRTA means to you and your quality of life as an education retiree. In 2009 we saw approximately 30% of the assets of our retirement system disappear. We went from 82% funded to 60% funded for the fiscal year 2008-2009. Our retirement system is funded on the expectation of an 8% return on investment EVERY YEAR. Our 3-yr return on investments at PSRS/PEERS is -3.5%, 5-yr return is 1.5%, 10-yr return 2.7%, and our 25-yr return is 9.3%. This is of great concern for both the active educator as well as the retiree. It has been stated by PSRS/PEERS that it will take a 38% contribution rate to stay funded. That is 19% from the active teacher and 19% from the school district. This fact has resulted in discussions of

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benefit reductions for both the active and the retiree in 2009. This is the whole truth. Any reduction of benefits will take an act of the Missouri Legislature. MRTA will not shrink from the task at hand. As the voice of education retirees, MRTA will fight for your hard earned benefits. We will need "STRENGTH IN NUMBERS" and an involvement in state government like this has not been needed for many years.

It is important that you review the MRTA 2010 Legislative Platform. It has changed significantly from the 2009 Legislative Platform when we were working for increases in benefits. We are now working to protect the benefits we have and to preserve the financial integrity/independence of the PSRS/PEERS Retirement System. Right now, there is serious discussion of combining all state retirement systems under one roof. In effect a state takeover of our system (November 20, 2009, St. Louis Business Journal, "Battle Brews Over Missouri State Pension Funds"). MRTA will need STRENGTH IN NUMBERS and member involvement.

The World Is Run By Those Who Show Up! The Squeaky Wheel Gets The Grease!

On the positive side, 50% of your retirement income will be exempt from Missouri State taxes for the 2009 tax year. All of your out-of-pocket insurance premiums will be 100% deductible. This is a direct result of MRTA and our work in the Missouri Legislature. This legislation was enacted in 2007. My message to then Speaker, Rod Jetton, was that we need to make Missouri a "Retiree Friendly" state and include education retirees. There were many associations opposed. This tax cut was a direct result of your membership in MRTA by allowing MRTA to "show up" with an everyday presence at the state capitol. But let us be reminded that the legislature gives and the legislature can take away whether we are talking tax cuts or retirement benefits. *The world is run by those who show up and the squeaky wheel gets the grease!* I know this to be true as I served 10 years in the Legislature, eight of which were in House leadership. MRTA membership allows education retirees to "show up" and to "squeak"!

God Helps Those Who Help Themselves!

Please note that MRTA is independent, nonpartisan and does not endorse candidates. MRTA works for all Missouri Education Retirees and Missouri Public Education. Please help me spread the word in 2010 about MRTA--what we do and what we stand for. Our strength is in the number of retirees MRTA represents. Ask someone to join MRTA. We will pray that 2010 will be a better year than 2009. God helps those who help themselves!