

Cost of Living Adjustments for Retired State Employees

BACKGROUND

More than 120,000 Oklahomans depend on state retirement (or pension) systems for their retirement income. These retirees include state employees and all the state's teachers, firefighters, and police officers. Retirement systems are funded by contributions from both employee and employer, by dedicated state taxes, and by earnings on investments, which pay about 80 cents of every dollar in retirement benefits.

Retirees get a fixed monthly retirement benefit that is based on their salary and their years of service. Since most Oklahoma public servants were paid well under national and regional salary levels when they worked, their retirement benefit is less competitive, too.

Unlike Social Security and many state retirement systems, Oklahoma law does not provide regular cost of living adjustments (COLAs) for retirees. In fact, the last time a COLA was granted was 2008. Since that time, the general cost of living has gone up by 16 percent and their cost for health insurance has risen by 42 percent.

These Oklahoma public servants gave decades of their lives to make our communities healthier, better educated, safer, and stronger. It's time for all Oklahomans to give back to them by keeping them more secure in retirement.



THE SOLUTION

- Provide a 4 percent cost of living adjustment for state retirees who have not seen an increase in their pensions since 2008

Become An Advocate

Making change happen will require Oklahomans from all walks of life to advocate with lawmakers and speak out in their communities. OK Policy has resources available on our website or connect with Together Oklahoma (TOK), our statewide grassroots advocacy coalition.



For links to additional information visit us online at

www.okpolicy.org

2020 Legislative FOCUS AREAS



PROTECT MEDICAID

- Keep path clear for Oklahoma voters to determine SQ 802 for straightforward Medicaid expansion
- Avoid legislation for other Medicaid expansion options that would reduce access to health care and tie up the state in lawsuits



TARGETED CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

- Rebuild financial structure for the state's criminal justice system to remove its reliance on fines and fees to fund its operations
- Modernize Oklahoma's sentencing based on national best practices



TAX CUT FOR WORKING OKLAHOMANS

- Restore refundability for the Earned Income Tax Credit, which most benefits Oklahoma's working poor while reducing the effects of poverty



PAID FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE FOR WORKERS

- Adopt statewide insurance programs to make paid family and medical leave available to all workers and self-employed through a payroll tax of less than 1 percent



COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENTS FOR RETIRED STATE EMPLOYEES

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