



# Bulletin Board

[www.retiredteachers.org](http://www.retiredteachers.org)

## Advocating for all Indiana Retired Educators

### A Message from the President



For at least ten years there has been a legislative force working silently behind the scenes in the Indiana Statehouse. Its name was unspoken and its participants unmentioned. However, during the past few years its presence and many of its forces have become known, the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC).

Created in 1975, ALEC is an American organization composed of state

legislators, business giants, and foundations from across the nation. It is a 501(c) 3 organization, which means that its works and expenses are tax-deductible. Through its work ALEC creates model legislation for its legislative members to take back to their state governments to implement. ALEC members meet yearly for week-long meetings in expensive hotels with lavish meals and refreshments. For these meetings, no outsiders or press may enter. A 501(c) 3 is supposed to be non-political, but somehow this organization has been able to skirt this part of the law.

ALEC supports its work through monies from large businesses and national foundations. Over 300 companies such as Exxon Mobile, Pfizer, Duke Energy, Peabody Energy, and Bayer provide funds for ALEC's work. Large foundations such as the Charles Koch Foundation, the Pew Charitable Trust, and the DeVos Foundation provide additional millions of dollars to its coffers.

ALEC's work is powerful and its programs reach every aspect of Hoosier/American life. It is composed of nine task forces (1) Education, (2) Civil Justice, (3) Commerce, Insurance and Economic Development, (4) Technology and Communication, (5) Energy, Environment, and Agriculture, (6) Health and Human Services, (7) International Relations, (8) Justice Performance Projects, and (9) Tax and Fiscal Policy.

Business Week reported that "part of ALEC's mission is to present industry-backed legislation as grassroots work. ALEC does not disclose its membership list or the origin of its model policies, but its role in drafting and distributing

model legislation through its lawmaker members became public knowledge as the result of the Freedom of Information Act."

In 2012, Walter Mondale, former Democratic Vice President of the United States, and Arne Carlson, former Republican governor of Minnesota, referred in an op-ed piece to the political activities of the Koch family and ALEC, saying: "ALEC is the creation of the Koch brothers who amassed their fortunes in oil and who live in Florida. The goal of ALEC is to influence legislators across the nation."

ALEC supporters are quiet about their involvement. The programs they support are presented as individual state legislator's ideas. One of ALEC's prize models for legislation is the Indiana's Charter School Program. This program, in its presentation to state legislators, was never once referred to as an ALEC-generated program.

The educational goals for ALEC are stated clearly on its webpage by Inez Feltscher, the director of the Education and Workforce Development Task Force, "...the future of American education involves empowering all parents with educational choice, charter school policy and school choice programs."

Privatization of education has become a major goal of ALEC. Its work is not only evident in Indiana but most all of the United States. The effects of this goal on Indiana Public Education is visibly obvious across the state: school-budget restraints because money is going to charter schools, stagnant income growth for teachers, and school closures because of the lack of student population.

The Center for Media and Democracy, a nonprofit liberal watchdog and advocacy organization, reported in 2016 that "Despite widespread public opposition to the corporate-driven education privatization agenda, at least 172 measures reflecting American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) model bills were introduced in 42 states in 2015." The CMD continued by stating that "ALEC's education task force has pushed legislation for decades to privatize public schools, weaken teachers' unions, and lower teaching standards. ALEC model bills divert taxpayer money from public to private schools through a variety of 'voucher' and 'tuition

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## Executive Director's Message



As you receive this edition of the Bulletin Board, the General Assembly committee's will be winding down and the bills will be going to the full House and Senate for 3rd reading votes. It is important to continue our grass root approach and let our legislators know we are watching and care how they vote. The Senate is in control of our "13th Check" HB 1537 this half of the session. We know the House is in total support of HB 1537. They passed the bill unanimously and

hopefully will continue to put pressure on the Senate to pass and possibly increase it if the budget forecast is positive in April.

We will continue to push back against HB 1463 "DC Option" for future educators and it will probably be our last chance to stop this bill. It passed the House by basically a party line vote 68-25. Hopefully we can sway some Senators to our side and stop this bill. If it gets out of committee, the battle gets much tougher.

Our Legislative Brunch is scheduled at a great time as we enter the last 3 weeks of the legislative session. We hope that many of you have planned to attend and will make appointments with your legislators, especially senators.

This legislative session we enhanced our efforts to keep you informed quickly and routinely by using email, Facebook, and a weekly podcast on the legislative happenings. We know many of you wrote or spoke with your legislators, because they mentioned it to us in meetings or during their committee meetings. They do know you care and are concerned on pension issues. Unfortunately, not all votes go our way and the legislators stick to their caucus ideals over their constituents' beliefs and needs.

Although the legislature takes up a great deal of time, we continue to reach out to serve our members. We recently hosted a webcast on Medicare Fraud and Scams by Barbara Miller. If you have other topics you would like information on, please let the office know.

Soon you will receive information and details as we announce our very own IRTA VISA Credit Card for members. IRTA will benefit more if you enroll online through our website or through the email that will be coming your way. IRTA does not receive as much if you enroll through the direct mailing.

On March 1st we went online with Amazon Smile that will allow you to make donations directly to the Indiana Retired Teachers Foundation (IRTF). They may at times run specials where they will donate to IRTF a percentage of your purchases. So if you use Amazon, please remember IRTF.

We are hoping to receive enough signatures from local groups this month to apply for our own state license plate. If not, we will try again this year to come up with 500 signatures of people that would want an IRTA license plate that will support our Foundation.

The Bylaws Committee and IRTA Board are beginning a two year review process of and redrafting our Bylaws that have not had a complete review since IRTA was started in 1950. A few revised Articles will be brought forward to the Representative Assembly this June for review and action.

We hope you have saved the date for the Representative Assembly this year. It will be held on Wednesday, June 14 at Primo South in Indianapolis. The Foundation will once again hold a Silent Auction, a famous Indiana Author/Poet will entertain us, along with an election of officers, general IRTA business reports and our vendors/partners will be available for information.

We hope everyone has had a healthy and safe winter and is having a great start to spring.



tax credit' programs. They promote unaccountable charter schools and shift power away from democratically-elected local school boards."

Another of ALEC's programs is the privatization of public pensions. This affects all teachers and state employees. On the ALEC website one reads, "Modern, 401(k)-style plans are now commonplace in the private sector. For state workers, however, traditional pensions are still the norm....If states are to keep their promises to retirees as well as current workers, pension reform is essential.... Unlike traditional pensions, 401(k)-style retirement plans offer state employees true retirement security, with the advantages of flexibility and mobility. With private retirement accounts, state employees would finally have real ownership and control, while minimizing costs for the state taxpayers they serve."

The important words from the statement above are the last eight – "minimizing cost for the state taxpayers they serve." For the past four years, the Indiana Legislature has seen bills presented to start privatizing public employee and teacher pension funds in order to get the pension program out of the state's responsibility. Again, Indiana is not alone in this battle. The movement is nationwide.

The National Institute on Retirement Security (NIRS) has published article after article showing how a Defined Contribution (DC) program (401k) is far less beneficial to

a retiree's retirement than a Defined Benefit (DB) program (regular pension). 401k programs were designed to be an individual's saving program, not a pension program. In all cases, employees on a DC plan must save twice as much money to equal the pension amount of a DB plan. For educators on school salaries today, this put an extreme burden on saving for retirement. In addition, DC plans have higher fees, are extremely vulnerable to the Stock Market, and does not guarantee a lifetime retirement.

IRTA, as well as other educational organizations, have taken a strong stand against these issues. The problem is that the forces proposing these issues have thrown much power and might toward achieving their goals. The only voice in Indiana that is more powerful than the voice of ALEC is the voice of the Indiana voter. It is important for Indiana educators to review educational and retirement issues with their legislators, encouraging their legislators to support public education and public pension issues. Your vote and your voice are the legislative power sources of our state and nation.

*"Let us never forget that government is ourselves and not an alien power over us. The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not a President and senators and congressmen and government officials, but the voters of this country."* Franklin D. Roosevelt

## Florida Retired Teachers' Meetings



Executive Director Tom Mellish and Indiana Retired Teacher President Dennis Bourquein and his wife Betty, met in January in Fort Meyers and in Leesburg, FL, for the annual meeting for Indiana retirees living in Florida during the winter months.

President Bourquein spoke of the things that the Executive Board of the Indiana Retired Teachers had worked on during the past year: the new IRTA logo, the updating of the IRTA website with the webcasts and blogs having been added to keep retirees informed about current legislative action and other items of interest to retirees, the updating of the By-Laws which had not been done since the organization of the IRTA, new

benefits which have been added for retired teachers, and the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) which is driving policy in many different areas, especially education. Much of this information can be found at [www.retiredteachers.org](http://www.retiredteachers.org).

Tom Mellish, Executive Director of the Indiana Retired Teachers, spoke of legislation which is being presented in both the Indiana House and Senate. Included are three bills regarding a COLA or 13th stipend, possible legislation on the Defined Contribution bill, and other possible legislation on the Rule of 95 (a possible change from the Rule of 85). Mellish again encouraged those in attendance to check out the website for up-to-date information as things change rapidly during the legislative session. Also, please tune in to the monthly blogs and the weekly podcasts on the legislative sessions.

Efforts are made to keep everyone abreast of happenings with the retired teachers, particularly during the legislative session.



## Foundation News

THE Indiana Retired Teachers Foundation (IRTF) needs your help to:

\* spread the word about the availability of a \$2000 scholarship to a child, grandchild, niece/nephew, legal dependent or spouse of a member (associate or regular) of the IRTA who is also a TRF member. The scholarships are awarded to sophomores and juniors who have been accepted into the education program of an Indiana college or university. One scholarship maximum is awarded to each of our 10 areas. The scholarship applications are available online and are due April 29, 2017. Details are available online.

\* spread the word about "A Hand UP" \$1000 grants for retired educators who are IRTA members. These grants are intended to help retired educators who face a temporary financial shortfall. Past grants have been awarded to help repair flood and natural disaster damage, purchase hearing aids, pay back property taxes, and such items. "A Hand UP" applications are accepted year-round.

\*let us know of any grants available that can help finance IRTF programs. Our grant writer is always on the lookout for grant opportunities. Please contact the office with any information.

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!

For additional information and forms, please go the IRTA website and click on the Foundation tab.



### IRTF Silent Auction

The IRTF needs funds to provide scholarships, Active Teacher Grants, and A Hand UP grants.

One annual IRTF fundraiser is the Silent Auction, held at the RA.

During your next local meeting, please consider contributing to this June's Silent Auction. Please donate items valued less than \$150. In the past, some clubs have received contributions from community businesses, and then collected the items into a basket. Some showcased the talents of members in quilt, woodworking, and jewelry making. Some instead made a financial contribution. However your club can help is appreciated!

Donations can be delivered to the IRTA office in Indy prior to the RA or brought to the RA on June 14. Then come to the RA ready to bid!



**52nd  
IRTA**

**Representative Assembly**

June 14th at 9:00 a.m.  
Primo South  
Indianapolis, Indiana

Be part of the fun, join the IRTA Choir, find treasurers at the IRTF Silent Auction, vote for officers, listen to a famous Indiana Author/Poet, celebrate our award winning locals and members and enjoy a great lunch and fellowship.

SPONSORED BY INDIANA RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION



# LEGISLATIVE BRUNCH

## WHEN

**April 4, 2017**  
**9:30am - 11:30am**

## WHERE

**State House**

**WWW.RETIREDTEACHERS.ORG**

**Bus Transportation  
will be provided from  
the IRTA Offices.**

**Buses will leave IRTA  
at 8:30**

**Buses will leave the  
State House at 11:30**

**There is no cost for  
the brunch or bus  
transportation.**

**1-888-454-9333**

## IRTA Website

If you have not been on the IRTA website at [www.retiredteachers.org](http://www.retiredteachers.org), you are missing a wealth of information. There are blogs being added monthly, informational webcasts podcast archived on the website along with local RTA information and links to their websites. You can also friend IRTA on Facebook and follow on Twitter.

Log-on and check out what is happening and available through your IRTA!

### INDIANA RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION VARIANCE REPORT SIX MONTH--PERIOD ENDED 2/28/2017

	Year-to-date Amount	Budget-year-to- Amount	Var-amt
<b>INCOME:</b>			
REGULAR MEMBER DUES	589,572	665,000	(75,428)
ASSOCIATE MEMBER DUES	20,310	21,500	(1,190)
GAIN/(LOSS) ON SALE-SECURITIES			
TCU INTEREST-ASSOCIATION	91		
INVESTMENT INCOME-TOTAL	82,619	55,000	27,619
FLORIDA MEETINGS INCOME	2,070	5,000	
REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY INCOME	26	6,000	
MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	440	14,000	
ROYALTY ENDORSEMENT FEE	29,960	57,500	(27,540)
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>725,087</b>	<b>824,000</b>	<b>(98,913)</b>
<b>OFFICE OPERATIONS:</b>			
OCCUPANCY-RENT	20,763	59,000	(38,237)
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & MAINT.	10,683.93	36,000	(25,316)
STAFF TRAVEL, PARKING & MEALS	1,832	5,000	(3,168)
SALARIES-OFFICE STAFF	124,991	250,000	(125,009)
PAYROLL TAXES & RETIREMENT EXPENSE	17,536	37,500	(19,964)
GROUP INSURANCE	35,908	83,000	(47,092)
OTHER INSURANCE	1,529	3,650	(2,121)
PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS	0	3,000	(3,000)
DEPRECIATION EXPENSE	7,337	10,500	(3,163)
DUES & SUBSCRIPTIONS	845	750	95
OFFICE, PAYROLL SERVICES, & OTHER EXP	2,393	4,000	(1,607)
UNFORSEEABLE EXPENSES	0	25,000	(25,000)
HUMAN RESOURCES EXPENSE	0	2,000	(2,000)
LEGAL & ACCOUNTING	11,956	18,000	(6,044)
DISCOUNT ON RETIREMENT LIABILITY	0		
POSTAGE EXPENSE	16,111	35,000	(18,889)
PRINTING & SUPPLIES	18,268	30,000	(11,732)
<b>TOTAL OFFICE OPERATIONS EXPENSE</b>	<b>270,151</b>	<b>602,400</b>	<b>(332,249)</b>
<b>PROGRAM EXPENSES:</b>			
INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT FEES-TOTAL	9,425	17,500	(8,075)
GRANTS TO FOUNDATION	0		
LEGISLATIVE EXPENSE	10,286	12,000	(1,714)
LOBBYING SERVICES	19,500	40,000	(20,500)
MARKETING EXPENSE	40,497	25,000	15,497
REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY	(200)	14,500	(14,700)
FALL AREA WORKSHOPS	9,485	15,000	(5,515)
SPRING COMMITTEE WORKSHOPS	0	5,000	(5,000)
SUMMER LOC OFFICERS WS/OTHER COM.	1,481	5,000	(3,519)

### INDIANA RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION BALANCE SHEET

	As of 2/28/2017
<b>ASSETS:</b>	
<b>CURRENT ASSETS:</b>	
CASH	\$ 19,531
DUE FROM INVESTMENTS	1,175
PREPAID EXPENSES	11,265
DUE FROM LIFE MEMBERS	10,469
DUE FROM IRTF	3,806
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 46,245</b>
<b>INVESTMENTS:</b>	
INVESTMENTS PR MED ACCOUNT	\$ 167,657
INVESTMENTS CD ACCOUNT	381,779
INVESTMENTS CORP ACCOUNT	1,358,858
INVESTMENTS-LIFE ACCOUNT	626,557
<b>TOTAL INVESTMENTS</b>	<b>\$ 2,534,851</b>
<b>PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT:</b>	
FIX ASSETS - FURNITURE & FIXT	\$ 151,066
LEASEHOLD IMPROVEMENTS	2,292
LESS ACCUMULATED DEPRECIATION	(121,843)
<b>TOTAL PROPERTY &amp; EQUIPMENT</b>	<b>\$ 31,516</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 2,612,612</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES:</b>	
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE	\$ 8,510
EMPLOYEE WITHHOLDINGS	0
ACCRUED PAYROLL	6,981
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$ 15,491</b>
DEFERRED REVENUE-MISC	4,583
RETIREMENT INSURANCE LIABILITY	116,222
RETIREMENT INSURANCE DISCOUNT	(31,554)
UNEARNED MEMBER DUES	124,240
UNEARNED LIFE MEMBER DUES	232,725
LIFE MEMBER-INSTALLMENTS DUE	49,908
<b>TOTAL OTHER LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$ 496,125</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$ 511,617</b>
<b>FUND BALANCES:</b>	
FUND BALANCE	\$ 1,554,710
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS-BD DESIGNATED	\$ 219,787
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>\$ 1,774,497</b>
NET INCOME (LOSS)	\$ 326,499
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; FUND BALANCES</b>	<b>\$ 2,612,612</b>



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# News and Updates

## Legislative Update

At press time HB 1463 “DC Option” bill was headed to the Senate Labor and Pension Committee for a hearing and a vote. We had met with committee members with the hope to stall it in committee.

HB 1537 “13th Check” bill was also being heard in the Senate Labor and Pension Committee at press time. We feel pretty confident it will stay intact and be passed for the 2 year biennium. We are also hoping that we get a strong April Budget Forecast and that they may consider increasing the “13th Check”.

Steve Beebe and I appreciate all of you that have called or written your legislators. Your contacts make a big difference and help us tremendously with our battles. Many legislators mention to us that they have heard from retired educators.

Your representatives in the House can all be thanked for passing the HB 1537 “13th Check” unanimously.

## Indiana Public Retirement System News

The Indiana Public Retirement System (INPRS) has made some changes in the past few months. You may find information about the changes on their website <https://secure.in.gov/inprs>. One change was phasing out the Guaranteed Fund and replacing it with the Stable Value Fund for the Annuity Savings Account (ASA). The Stable Value Fund is a very conservative and safe investment as was the Guaranteed Fund.

The ASA rate for April 1, 2017 to June 30, 2017 will be 4.01, up from the present 3.08. This rate will change quarterly. Quarterly annuity market rate changes won't affect you if you don't convert your ASA funds to an INPRS annuity, nor does it affect current retirees and benefit recipients who previously annuitized their ASA funds with us. MetLife will become the provider of the annuity funds for the state on January 1, 2018.

More changes are sure to come to INPRS and the best way to keep abreast of the changes is to check their website regularly.

## New Benefit for IRTA Members

We will have our own IRTA Credit Card available to our members and you will be receiving information soon. The card will be a VISA card through the First National Bank of Omaha. The benefits to our members are many. Cardholders will earn 1.5% back for every purchase made on the card and may redeem their points for cash back, unrestricted travel or merchandise. If you spend \$1500 in the first 3 billing cycles, you will earn a \$50 bonus. There is no annual fee and 0% APR on balance transfers for the first 12 months. After 12 months the APR will be between 12.99%-22.99% based on the Prime Rate.

You will be able to sign up electronically on our website or by mailing in an application. Be on the lookout for more information about the IRTA Credit Card.

## Indiana EdCast

Catch the latest news about the Indiana Retired Teachers Association each week on their podcast Indiana EdCast. All the Indiana EdCasts are archived on the website. January through April we have focused on the legislature. The following months we will have educational pieces, benefit highlights, and other news about IRTA. Each podcast runs approximately 20-30 minutes.

## Board Members/Area Directors

We have several openings on our Board of Directors this year due to their terms ending. These positions are open in Areas 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9. We do not have any candidates for Areas 3, 5, and 7 at press time. Please seriously consider serving IRTA in one of these positions. You may apply on our website or contact Janet Stout for further details at [jlstout44@gmail.com](mailto:jlstout44@gmail.com) or 574-946-4424.



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www.retiredteachers.org  
or



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Indiana Public Retirement System (INPRS)

TRF Pension Account Information.....1-317-232-3860  
Toll-free (outside of Indianapolis area).....1-888-286-3544  
E-mail.....questions@inprs.in.gov  
Web site.....www.in.gov/inprs

Association Member Benefits Advisors (AMBA)

Group Insurance Policies.....1-800-258-7041  
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Please direct my contribution to the following program(s):

AMOUNT

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PROGRAM

Scholarship Fund  
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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