



Joan Huffman

Senator ★ District 17

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Retired Educators to Receive 13th Check

Austin - Senate Bill 12, authored by Senator Joan Huffman (R - Houston), became effective on June 10, 2019. This means that early this fall, the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) expects to disburse supplemental annuity payments to eligible retirees as required in Senate Bill 12. The bill makes adjustments to the TRS pension fund to make it actuarially sound and enables TRS to provide a 13th check in the amount of their annuity payment, capped at \$2,000, to eligible retirees that retired on or before December 31, 2018.

"Without a long-term, cost-efficient proposal to pay down the debt, like Senate Bill 12, TRS retirees would not have received a benefit enhancement this biennium, as the Legislature cannot grant a benefit enhancement by law unless the fund is actuarially sound," Huffman said. "Working with the House sponsor Dr. Greg Bonnen, Speaker Dennis Bonnen, Lt. Governor Dan Patrick, Finance Chair Jane Nelson, and Appropriations Chair John Zerwas, we were able to fix these longstanding funding issues and, as a result, have provided security for TRS retirees for years to come."

Furthermore, the Legislature was able to fully fund the 13th check without issuing any further debt to the state or to the pension fund through Senate Bill 500. "We can never truly repay our retired teachers for their invaluable service to our state, but this will help -- and they deserve it," said Senator Jane Nelson, author of S.B. 500. The bill also provided \$524 million to fund additional state contributions to the pension fund in fiscal years 2020 and 2021. These increases in state funding are permanent increases, dedicated to Texas' current and future retired public educators. Additionally, S.B. 500 provided \$589 million to fund supplemental annuity checks for 405,538 annuitants or alternate payees. Of those, 193,279 will receive a \$2,000 check.

"I have told our retired teachers repeatedly that my goal is to keep TRS solvent FOREVER," said Lt. Governor Dan Patrick. "We made great progress in accomplishing that goal this session. By making the TRS pension system actuarially sound we are avoiding the mounting pension debt that has bogged down so many states and we are able to provide our teachers with a 13th check this year. Other than a parent, no person is more important to the development of our children than our teachers and I am proud that we are able to provide these additional benefits. I am also grateful to Senators Joan Huffman and Jane Nelson for their dedication and leadership on this critical issue."

For more information regarding the disbursements, please contact the the Teacher Retirement System of Texas at 1-800-223-8778.

Senator Joan Huffman represents District 17, which includes portions of Brazoria, Fort Bend, and Harris counties. Huffman currently serves as President Pro Tempore of the Texas Senate, Chair of the Senate Committee on State Affairs, Chair of the Senate Select Committee on Redistricting, Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on Criminal Justice, and as a member of the Senate Committee on Finance, Senate Committee on Administration, and the Legislative Budget Board. Huffman and her family reside in Houston.

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