



Serving Retirees Since 1956  
Membership Statewide

Summer 2022

# The Reporter

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Joan Yulduzian



Dear Fellow Members,

It has been an honor and a delightful experience to serve as your President of DRSPA. My term is ending this coming October. Working with the Executive Board and our Executive Director Wayne Emsley has been one of the best

experiences of my career as an educator. The consistent hard work and effort that the Executive Board, Executive Director and our legislative advisor, Terry Spence have displayed during these challenging times is truly commendable. The DRSPA Executive Board wouldn't exist if it wasn't for the dedicated retirees who give of their time, energy, and finances.

One of the amazing advocates for DRSPA has been Senator Bruce Ennis. He worked with DRSPA and created the Senate Bill 14 (SB-14). Not only that, but he also worked tirelessly to get the support of other legislators and the Governor. Senator Ennis along with several other allies have respected, admired, and supported retired school personnel by their actions. These efforts were especially challenging due to the reluctance of the Governor to support our need for a long-term pension adjustment plan. As detailed in this newsletter, DRSPA's plan, as described in an amended Senate Bill 14 was approved unanimously on June 30, by both the House and Senate. If you haven't done so already, I hope you will take a few moments and email or phone a "thank you" to your members of the legislature. Thank them for voting to approve SB-14.

Actions are the voice for the retirees. I have, along with hundreds of retirees written, phone called and e-mailed legislators and the Governor explaining the value and costs of SB-14. I want to thank the numerous DRSPA members who took the time to carry out this important task. Your efforts were key to the unanimous passage of SB-14.

DRSPA is the voice for public school retirees, even those who do not assist DRSPA in any way. We will continue to work hard for the retirees regarding their eroding pension loss. We will continue to advocate for our health benefits. We will continue to work for all retirees. The heroes in this equation are the DRSPA officials and other volunteers who give of their time in spite of personal tragedy, family loss and hardships.

DRSPA is an amazing organization that I sincerely hope will be moving forward into the future. We need newly retired school personnel to join the organization, to keep DRSPA moving and to keep DRSPA alive and well. The landscape could possibly look very different, if we are not able to continue to bring in new members. The future of DRSPA depends on creating new members and an active membership.

It has been a great honor and a delightful experience to serve as the President of DRSPA. I am confident that DRSPA will continue to advocate for pensioners as they seek a dignified retirement for former public school personnel. I wish you all good health and a happy autumn.

Sincerely,

Joan Yulduzian  
President DRSPA

**Delaware Retired School  
Personnel Association**  
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Wilmington, DE 19803  
(302) 674-8252

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## Executive Director's Report

Wayne Emsley



As we all know from watching TV, commercials don't run just once. Apparently, researchers and media experts have found that it takes a repetition of the same message for us humans to finally act. With this repetition in mind, I'm writing this message – it's the same message that I've written in the past. Perhaps I'll need to write it again in the future as well.

Put simply, we need a few younger DRSPA members to step up and volunteer to become Executive Board members. The Board meets three or four times per year in Dover, typically in August, January, and April. A fourth meeting is held, if needed, in October. The meetings begin at 12:15 pm, lunch is provided, and each meeting usually lasts about 2 hours.

At present the Executive Board consists of 20 members. The Board has had four resignations recently and there is a need to replace these individuals. Of perhaps greater concern is the fact that the Board continues to age. Only four members are below the age of 70 and a majority are well past blowing out 75 candles. In short, the Board is in dire need of you if you are less than 68 years old. By joining the Board you will provide a critical and important viewpoint as DRSPA navigates a post-Covid pandemic world that is increasingly more electronic media focused.

In today's rapidly changing world, if you aren't moving forward then you are, in reality, moving backward. We need your help to keep our forward momentum.

I've been retired for 15 years and joined DRSPA soon after I retired. It wasn't long before it became clear to me that the legislative success that we were enjoying at that time was a result of the investment in time and effort made by Board members in the past. Over the past two years DRSPA has enjoyed noteworthy legislative accomplishments. Part of this success is due to the contribution made by Board members five or ten years ago. We've been beneficiaries of their past investment.

I'm asking you to honor that prior service by volunteering to join the Executive Board now, so that future public school pensioners can enjoy a dignified retirement.

I hope you will at least consider joining the Board. Please contact me by phone (302 674-8252) or email ([email@drspa.org](mailto:email@drspa.org)) for additional information.

## Legislative Report

The 2022 legislative session ended on June 30. DRSPA legislative efforts were extremely successful this year. Among the flurry of bills passed by the legislature were a number of items that combined to improve every state pensioner's financial situation:

This session resulted in the following actions:

- A 2% permanent pension increase for those pensioners who retired before July 1, 2017
- A 3% permanent pension increase for those pensioners who retired before July 1, 1992
- A one-time \$500 pension "bonus" to be paid in November for all pensioners.
- An increase in the school tax credit from \$400 to \$500, benefitting those pensioners who live in Delaware
- A \$300 per person rebate payment, which was paid in April or May, to pensioners and other citizens of Delaware.

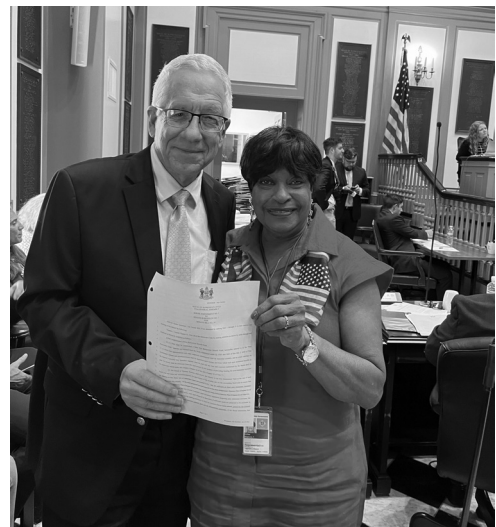
In addition, the State's budget included a one-time payment of \$150 million to "pay off" two pension increases: one that was granted on July 1, 2021 and the permanent pension increase noted above. This one-time payment is very significant. If the state grants a wage increase to employees, that additional cost goes on forever. But pension increases are paid for differently. Federal law requires that the additional cost of a pension increase must be "paid off" in five years or less.

In the past Delaware has utilized the full five year period, making it more of a challenge to convince the legislature and governor to grant additional pension increases during the five year "pay off" period. For the past two years DRSPA has advocated for a shorter "pay-off" period. It appears that the governor and legislature have finally heard us.

And finally, and perhaps most importantly, Senate Bill 14 was unanimously passed by both the Senate and House of Representatives on June 30. This bill, originally proposed by DRSPA is the first step in establishing "a long-term, financially sustainable plan to provide post-retirement increases with a goal to fully implement by June 30, 2026. Senate Bill 14 includes the following provisions:

- Pension increases will be recommended by the Board of Pension Trustees, a non-political committee that also manages our pension fund
- Pensioners who retired more than twenty years ago will receive a higher percentage increase than other pensioners

What were the major factors that contributed to DRSPA's legislative success this year? Wayne Emsley, Executive Director, identified three things: "First, the state had significant revenue this year. Second, the efforts of our lobbyist Terry Spence were critical. His ability to contact legislators personally gave DRSPA the inside track on legislative decision making. Finally, and probably most importantly, many DRSPA members contacted legislators and the governor by phone, email or letter. This grass-roots communication encouraged legislators from both political parties to support and vote for legislation beneficial to retired public school employees."



State Rep. Stephanie Bolden and DRSPA Executive Director Wayne Emsley working toward the passing of SB 14

## DRSPA Speaks to Delaware Senate

*On June 23, 2022, Wayne Emsley, DRSPA Executive Director, was asked to speak before the Senate session. Following his remarks, the Senate voted unanimously to approve Senate Substitute 1 for Senate Bill 14.*

Good afternoon,

I am Wayne Emsley, proud to be a native Delawarean, retired science teacher and Executive Director of the Delaware Retired School Personnel Association. Our organization advocates for the needs of over 13,000 retired custodians, counselors, principals, teachers, and other former public school employees.

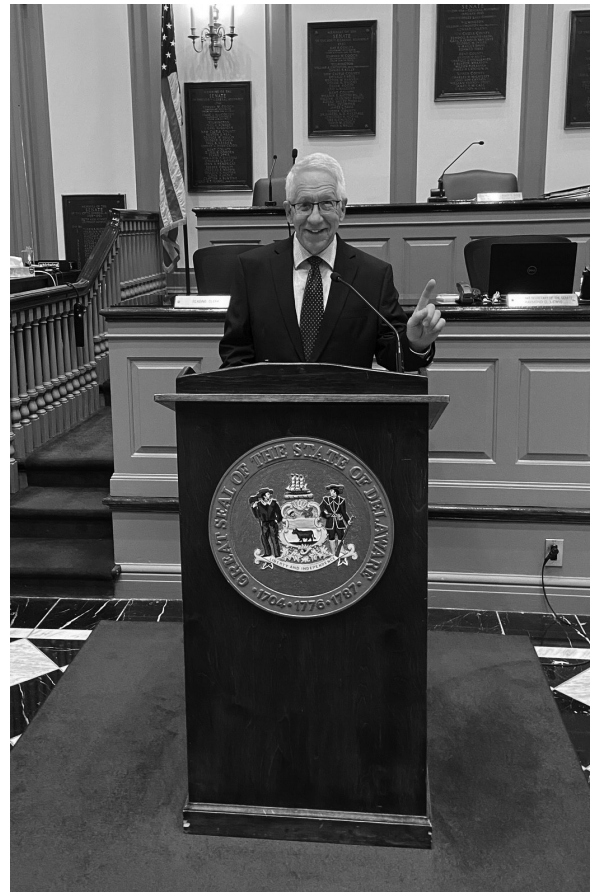
Senate Bill 14 and the associated amendments provide a framework for implementing Section 74 of the FY2022 Budget. The intent of that language is to “phase in the implementation” of a “long term, financially sustainable plan to provide post-retirement increases.” Senate Bill 14 is the first phase of this process. It provides guidelines for future pension adjustments, outlines a procedure implementing for these adjustments and targets future spending that is consistent with existing Delaware laws.

The present level of high inflation brings the need for this legislation – for a long term post-retirement adjustment – into sharp focus. All of us are seeing the purchasing power of our money decrease. We see it at the gas pump, the supermarket - in everything we need to live.

In a perfect world state retirees would see the state offset this inflation with annual cost-of-living increases. But we know the state can't afford that. Senate Bill 14 is a compromise. It is a compromise that the state can afford and is consistent with existing law. It is a compromise that will, in the future, provide limited, but much needed, pension adjustments to former public school employees.

I want to take a moment to thank Senator Ennis for his leadership regarding this legislation. Our members also want to thank the numerous senators and representatives who have co-sponsored SB 14 or expressed support. We want to thank the members the JFC for releasing the bill for your consideration. Finally, we wish to thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of this bill.

Our organization's goal is to seek a dignified retirement of public school retirees. We are asking the Senate's help in reaching that goal by passing Senate Bill 14 as amended.





## Pensioners Make Their Voices Heard

In late April DRSPA members and prospective members were asked to contact their state legislators and the Governor. This request was part of our advocacy for passage of Senate Bill 14. The response was impressive. As part of this activity, pensioners were asked to report back to DRSPA, indicating the legislative contacts that they completed. The following tables summarize the report results.

**Table A - Contacts by Recipient**

	Phone	Email	Letter	Total
Senator	51	92	29	172
Representative	55	95	49	199
Governor	53	92	11	156
Total	211	422	88	527

Table A provides some interesting information about who received pensioner communications. Governor Carney received 156 phone calls, emails and letters. Prior to DRSPA's campaign the Governor had been hesitant to support Senate Bill 14, favoring one-time expenditures instead. The results from Table A also indicate that senators received 172 contacts and House members received 199 letters, emails and phone calls. Tables B and C detail the number of communications received by each senator and representative. Senator S.

Elizabeth Lockman received no communications, while Senator Kyle Evans Gay received the largest number, 15. In the House of Representatives, Representatives Sherry Dorsey Walker, and Stephanie Bolden each received one communication; while Representatives Krista Griffith and Sean Lynn each received 10, the largest number. When it came time to vote, every senator and representative voted in favor of Senate Bill 14.

**Table B – Senate Contacts**

Senator	Contacts	Senator	Contacts
S. Elizabeth Lockman	0	Colin Bonini	9
Bryan Townsend	2	David Sokola	10
David Lawson	3	John Walsh	10
Bruce Ennis	4	Stephanie Hansen	10
Bryant Richardson	5	Spiros Mantzavinos	11
Darius Brown	5	Ernesto Lopez	12
Nicole Poore	6	Charles Paradee	13
Brian Pettyjohn	6	David Wilson	13
Marie Pinkney	7	Laura Sturgeon	14
Gerald Hocker	8	Kyle Evans Gay	15
Sarah McBride	9		

## Pensioners Make Their Voices Heard (cont.)

**Table C – Representative Contacts**

Member	Contacts	Member	Contacts
Sherry Dorsey Walker	1	Richard Collins	4
Stephanie Bolden	1	David Bentz	5
Kendra Johnson	2	Charles Postles, Jr.	5
John Mitchell	2	Charles “Bud” Freel	6
Andria Bennett	2	Peter Schwartzopf	6
Ruth Briggs King	2	Michael Smith	6
Nnamdi Chukwuocha	3	Paul Baumbach	6
Sherae’a Moore	3	Edward Osienski	6
Jeffrey Spiegelman	3	John Kowalko, Jr.	6
Valerie Longhurst	3	Larry Lambert	6
Franklin Cooke	3	Deborah Heffernan	7
Melissa Minor Bown	3	Lyndon Yearick	7
Madinah Wilson-Anton	3	Ronald Gray	7
Eric Morrison	3	Sean Matthews	8
William Carson	3	Stephen Smyk	8
Jesse Vandrwende	3	Kevin Hensley	9
Daniel Short	3	Michael Ramone	9
Kimberly Williams	4	Bryan Shupe	9
William Bush	4	Krista Griffith	10
Shannon Morris	4	Sean Lynn	10
Timothy Dukes	4		

In reviewing the results, Joan Yulduzian, DRSPA President noted two things, “First, I’m sure there were many pensioners, both DRSPA members and non-members, who made legislative contacts that were not reported. It is quite possible that over seven hundred phone calls, emails, and letters were actually sent. Second, these numbers are graphic proof that working together pensioners can make a difference. They certainly made a difference this legislative session.”

### Annual Meeting - Save the Date

The DRSPA State Annual Meeting will be held at the Modern Maturity Center, Dover, DE, on Wednesday, October 26, 2022, from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. The cost will be \$22.00 per person. Speakers will include Joanna Adams, Delaware Pension Office, who will provide her annual “State of Our Pensions” report. Faith Rentz, Director of State Benefits, will present “Upcoming Changes in Medical Benefits”. Other presentations will focus on issues that are important to retirees.

Attending this meeting is a great way to reconnect with old friends and colleagues, make new friends, and learn about issues important to Delaware pensioners. Specific information regarding the Annual Conference will be mailed to all members and new retirees in early September.

## Legacy Gifts Announced

*Editor's note: This article has been printed in a prior newsletter and is reprinted as a reminder of one of the unique services that DRSPA provides.*

Are you looking for a way to honor the memory and contributions of a loved one? Would you like to provide a remembrance for yourself, relative or fellow educator? The Delaware Retired School Personnel Association Executive Board recently established a Legacy Gift program that can be used to continue one's contribution into the future.

Legacy Gifts are donations made to the Delaware Retired School Personnel Association either (1) as a donation when the giver is living, or (2) as a planned future donation given through a will or other form of designation. The gift can be a specific dollar amount, as proceeds from a life insurance policy, or securities and/or mutual funds. The Legacy Gifts' donor's intent for the gift will be in writing and will be maintained by the Executive Director. Legacy Gifts can be provided anonymously or honor one or more persons by name.

Legacy Gifts can be made to the Legislative Fund, the Awards Fund, or to the General Operating budget. The giver of the Legacy Gift will determine the DRSPA fund that will receive the gift and the terms for distribution of the funds. In addition, the giver of the Legacy Gift will determine the number of years that the gift provides funds. Legacy Gifts typically have a lifetime greater than one year. While the Association will accept gifts in perpetuity, it is strongly recommended that Legacy Gifts have a maximum lifetime of 25 years.

If you are interested in establishing a Legacy Gift, the first step is to contact the Executive Director, Wayne Emsley, by email - [email@drspa.org](mailto:email@drspa.org), phone – (302) 674-8252 or at DRSPA, PO Box 7262, Wilmington, DE 19803.

### Upcoming Meeting Dates

<b>Annual Meeting</b>	October 26, 2022
<b>Executive Board</b>	January 11, 2023
<b>Executive Board</b>	April 5, 2023
<b>New Castle Co Meeting</b>	March 29, 2023
<b>Kent/Sussex Meeting</b>	May 11, 2023
<b>Executive Board</b>	August 9, 2023

### HOW TO CONTACT US

**Mail:** DRSPA, P.O. Box 7262,  
Wilmington, DE 19803

**Our phone number is:** 302-674-8252

You may also contact us via our website or email for upcoming events, pension office news, the link to our state legislators, and other DRSPA information.

**Our email address is:** [email@drspa.org](mailto:email@drspa.org)

**Our website address is:** [www.drspa.org](http://www.drspa.org)

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## **A Special Welcome to Recent Retirees ...**

For the first time, this issue of the Delaware Retired School Personal Association newsletter is being sent to 2022 retirees. Thank you for your service to the younger citizens of Delaware and congratulations on your retirement.

Interestingly, over the past ten years an average of 437 educators retired each year. This year over 630 persons retired from Delaware public schools. You have a lot of company!!

As you enter this new phase of your life journey, know that help with questions about health care, pensions and retirement is just a phone call or email away. DRSPA officials have a positive working relationship with State officials and are ready to help you get the most out of retirement.

We hope you find this newsletter informative. Our prime focus in the newsletter is to report on our successful legislative activities during the first half of 2022. We believe that a dignified retirement begins with adequate health care and pension increases to offset inflation. Both are controlled by the legislature. DRSPA continues to be a strong advocate on your behalf.

Again, thank you and congratulations

Phone: (302) 674-8252 Email: [email@drspa.org](mailto:email@drspa.org)