

Who are the Healthcare & Pension Advocates for STRS (HPA)?

HPA is a coalition of professional stakeholder groups representing the employees, employers and retirees of the State Teachers Retirement System (STRS).

Established in 2002, the coalition works collaboratively with the STRS Board and staff on issues that impact the pension and healthcare benefits of our shared constituencies—the more than 300,000 members and benefit recipients of STRS.

What does HPA Believe?

HPA believes that preserving pension and healthcare benefits for current and future retirees is sound public policy. Retirement benefits have a genuine and positive economic impact on the State as a whole. A high-quality education system is a necessity for Ohio's economic success and educators are the intellectual capital of that system. A secure pension and access to affordable healthcare in retirement represents

economic security for those currently retired and is critical to attracting and retaining educators. Further, HPA believes that public employers, employees and retirees all have a shared responsibility for adequately funding these critical benefits.

Our Membership Includes:

- **The Ohio Education Association**
- **The Ohio Education Association-Retired**
- **The Ohio Council of Higher Education Retirees**
- **The Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators**
- **The Ohio Association of Community Colleges**
- **The Ohio Retired Teachers Association**
- **The Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators**
- **The Buckeye Association of School Administrators**
- **The Inter-University Council of Ohio**
- **The Ohio Federation of Teachers**
- **The Ohio Conference of the American Association of University Professors**

Our view of the funding issue and the process.

- HPA recognizes that the unprecedented investment losses of the past year coupled with the increase in life expectancy of the STRS member population have put the long-term stability of the pension fund at risk.
- HPA favors using a consensus-based approach among the STRS stakeholders to identify both what must change and how much it must change.
- HPA believes that with more time for discussion and planning stakeholder consensus is possible. A consensus-based plan would be less divisive and face less opposition in the legislative process.

Our view of proposed changes to save the pension system.

- HPA supports changing age and service pension eligibility to reflect increased life expectancy, although we believe these changes should be phased in over a longer period of time than has been proposed.
- HPA supports changes to the annual cost of living adjustment (COLA) including a percentage reduction for all retirees and delayed eligibility for future retirees, rather than tiering the COLA as has been proposed.
- HPA favors increasing contributions shared equally between active teachers and employers.
- HPA supports giving the STRS Board authority to change certain pension-balancing factors within legislatively established parameters.
- HPA favors including adequate funding to sustain the STRS Healthcare Program as an integral part of any package of benefit changes.