



Thursday, July 17, 2025

The Honorable Governor Greg Abbott  
State Capitol Building  
1100 Congress Ave., Room 25.1  
Austin TX 78701

Dear Governor Abbott:

On behalf of the thousands of retired state employees of the Texas Public Employees Association (TPEA), we are writing to urge you to add another vital item to the Special Session: **a 13th check for Texans who struggle to live on their Employees Retirement System (ERS) pension.**

ERS retired state employees face significant financial challenges as inflation has substantially diminished the real value of their pensions, reducing their benefits to nearly half of their original value at retirement. The average annual pension of an ERS retiree is under \$22,285 a year.

During the 89th Regular Session, Representative Cody Vasut introduced HB 886, which passed the House with strong support with more than 130 House members voting for it. This bill would provide a modest 13th check for ERS retirees. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, the bill did not progress to a Senate hearing.

The proposed supplement would constitute a minimal expenditure for the state budget. The fiscal analysis of Representative Vasut's bill estimates the cost at approximately \$180 million. Considering the anticipated overflow from the Economic Stabilization Fund into General Revenue and federal reimbursements for border initiatives, the provision of a 13th check for state retirees is financially viable and would provide real relief to ERS retirees immediately.

It is important to remember that ERS retirees were once your dedicated employees who managed emergency disasters, maintained public safety, cared for vulnerable Texans, supported the state's infrastructure and so much more. They have not received a 13th check in over 22 years. Therefore, we urge you to include a 13<sup>th</sup> check legislation for ERS retirees in this Special Session agenda. The necessary resources are available, the need is significant, and it would contribute to strengthening Texas.

**Thank you for all you do for our great state.**

*Sincerely,*

Members of the Texas Public Employees Association (TPEA)