

TRTA'S LEGISLATIVE LINK—October 14, 2025

STRS LAWSUIT. As we already know, Republican leaders inserted the STRS board change into the state budget at the last minute, changing the composition of the board and denying any public comment on the policy amendment. The change was engineered by House Speaker Matt Huffman (R-Lima) and Senate President Rob McColley (R-Napoleon). It was drafted by Ohio Representative Adam Bird (R-New Richmond), current chair of the Ohio Retirement Study Council.

On Tuesday, **September 16, 2025**, active and retired members of OEA, OFT, and AAUP filed a lawsuit in the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas challenging HB 96's elimination of educator representation on the STRS Board. ORTA supports these efforts but has neither participated in this lawsuit, nor have they financially contributed to its filing. Retired OEA members Kevin Cain and Becky Brown along with active STRS-contributing educators from OFT and AAUP are serving as plaintiffs. **The complaint argues that this change is unlawful because 1) it violates equal protection by singling out STRS members (no action has been taken against the other four pension systems); 2) it violates the Ohio three-reading rule; and 3) it violates the Ohio Constitution's single-subject rule.**

On Wednesday, **September 17**, Franklin County Judge Andy Miller issued a ruling to temporarily block a lawsuit that would reduce the number of teacher-elected representatives on the board overseeing STRS Ohio until a preliminary injunction hearing is held, which was scheduled for Tuesday, September 30. On September 30, 2025, the State's appeal was denied. And on October 2 Judge Aveni of the Franklin County Common Pleas court entered an order formally extending the TRO until Wednesday, October 15, 2025. This means the TRO remains in place until the permanent injunction hearing originally scheduled for October 2 was rescheduled for Friday, October 10, 2025. Testifying witnesses were Glenetta Krause, an active teacher, Kevin King, a retiree, Rob McFee, OEA Secretary-Treasurer, and Darnold Johnson, OFT Legislative and Political Director. A decision is expected by October 14 or 15. The ruling from the Tenth District Court of Appeals denying the state's appeal of the TRO and the order extending the TRO are important steps moving forward in the ongoing fight to protect educators' ability to have a say in the future of their retirement fund.

Currently the 11-member board is composed of seven teacher-elected representatives and four political appointees. **Under the new law, the balance would shift to eight political appointees and just three educators.** Before the lawsuit, the new changes were scheduled to take effect at the end of September. **Contact Sandra O'Brien (sandra.obrien@ohiosenate.gov) and Nick Santucci (rep64@ohiohouse.gov) to voice concerns.**

STRS BOARD MEETING NEWS. At the September STRS board meeting, contributing teacher Chad Smith (Columbus City Schools, Franklin County) was welcomed to his first meeting as a board member. He was elected in the May 2025 election. Smith's term extends through August 31, 2029.

Cheiron, the State Teachers Retirement Board's actuarial consultant, led the board in a discussion about the long-term sustainability of our STRS Health Care Program. Cheiron reviewed options for revising the framework around making health care plan changes. Cheiron and the board discussed vital metrics, actuarial stress tests and other considerations that could be used to measure the "health" of the fund. The Retirement Board will continue this collaborative process at its October meeting.

Due to pending litigation regarding House Bill 96 amendments affecting STRS OH board composition and eligibility for officer positions, the board voted to defer the annual chair/vice chair elections until October. The current chair/vice chair will remain in office through the day prior to H.B. 96 amendments applicable to the STRS OH board being in force or effect.

CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING. On Monday, September 22, 2025, the Joint Committee on Congressional Redistricting held its first hearing. To date, the majority party has yet to introduce maps for public scrutiny. Current maps have produced 10 Republican representatives out of Ohio's 15 Congressional districts. These maps failed to gain bipartisan support and were ruled unconstitutional. The Democratic leadership in both the House and Senate have put forward a plan that would move Ohio's congressional districts closer to representing the overall results of statewide elections of the state (roughly 55% Republican). A second hearing was held on September 30. However, it seems unlikely that the legislature will move forward with a plan in September which means that the Ohio Redistricting Commission will be reconstituted to consider the issue in October.

On September 30 the joint committee on Congressional redistricting held its second and final public hearing. OEA President Jeff Wensing submitted written testimony to the committee urging its members to follow the Ohio Constitution and produce fair maps and provide transparency to the public.

LEGISLATION. HB 473 bill would preclude public employers from paying employee contributions to any of the state retirement systems. This would limit the scope of bargaining and could result in reduced compensation for public employees or increased costs for public employers.