

## TRTA'S LEGISLATIVE LINK FOR FEBRUARY 2024

**HB387** To dissolve the existing academic distress commissions, to repeal the law that creates new commissions, and to declare an emergency. (McNally L, Brent J)

**HB378** Homestead exemption for surviving spouses to authorize a full homestead exemption for surviving spouses of members of the uniformed services killed in the line of duty. (Lorenz B, Santucci N)

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In May 2023 Gov. Mike DeWine removed Wade Steen from the STRS Board because he missed three meetings and left early from three other meetings. Mr. Steen subsequently filed a lawsuit, appealing the governor's decision.

On February 6 Magistrate Thomas Scholl of the 10<sup>th</sup> District Court of Appeals **recommended** reinstatement of Mr. Steen. Magistrate Scholl's decision is **not final or binding**. A three-judge panel must review the **recommendation** and make a **final ruling to approve or reject Mr. Steen's removal**. At this time the **court** has not ruled on this case even though ORTA reported that it did. The final decision is yet to come, and Mr. Steen could appeal the decision to the Ohio Supreme Court. The *Columbus Dispatch* published this information on February 6.

ORTA has emailed members and published on its website that the **court** ruled on this; **that is not the case**. The **magistrate** ruled on this, not the **court**.

And as of Friday, February 9, there has been a change in the composition of the STRS Board. In May Governor DeWine appointed Brent Bishop to replace Wade Steen, but Mr. Bishop chose to resign on Friday morning. Also on Friday Governor DeWine appointed Brian Perara to replace Mr. Bishop. Mr. Perara was the financial director for the Ohio Senate for decades before accepting a lobbying job at OSU. Currently he is a senior policy advisor for ZHF Consulting in Columbus.

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The COLA is generally discussed at the March STRS board meeting, and health care costs/coverage are usually on the April and May agendas, with a vote in June.

**Search legislation at [legislature.ohio.gov](https://legislature.ohio.gov) to check the status of a bill.**

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