

The LASERS Vision:

Confidence in our service,
assuring financial security
for your future

LASERS Board of Trustees:

Shannon Templet,
2014 Board Chair
225.342.8273

Kathy Singleton,
2014 Board Vice Chair
504.896.2379

Thomas Bickham
225.342.6739

Connie Carlton
225.928.4265

Beverly Hodges
225.342.8844

Judge William Kleinpeter
225.346.4702

Janice Lansing
225.342.4698

Barbara McManus
337.433.8910

Lori Pierce
225.342.7012

Senator Elbert Guillory
225.342.2040

Hon. John Kennedy,
State Treasurer
225.342.0010

Commissioner Kristy Nichols
225.342.7086

Rep. Kevin Pearson
985.646.6487



2014 Mid-Legislative Session UPDATES As of 05.07.14

The 2014 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature convened March 10. A mid-session update on selected retirement bills is provided on pages 2-3. Bill statuses will be updated on the [LASERS website](#) as the Session progresses. The session must end by June 2. So far, SB 18 to grant a 1.5 percent COLA for eligible retirees and HB 1225 to change the COLA mechanism going forward are the bills to watch.



The Board MEMO

Shannon Templet, 2014 Board Chair

There is so much misinformation in the news about the state of public pensions that it can be challenging to separate fact from fiction. This is why the LASERS Board of Trustees and the executive staff spend considerable time providing the facts to legislators, LASERS members, and

the general public about the solvency of the System. We also communicate the efficiencies of LASERS and how reforms have already been implemented, both legislatively and internally, to improve LASERS financial soundness.

With that in mind, it gives me great pleasure to share important information from the newly released *2013 LASERS Economic Impact Study*, which drives home the positive impact that LASERS has on the state as a whole. The complete study is on the [LASERS website](#). Here are a few key findings:

- LASERS paid over \$1.07 billion in benefits to retirees and beneficiaries in FY 2013.
- With over 92 percent of LASERS beneficiaries living in Louisiana, the benefits paid provide strong economic stimulus for communities throughout our state.

Board continued on page 4

2014 Mid-Legislative Update As of 05.07.14

Support
Neutral
Oppose

Bill #	Author	Impacts	Description	Status
--------	--------	---------	-------------	--------

SYSTEM FIXES

SB 13	Peacock	LASERS & TRSL	Changes the LASERS actuarial funding method from projected unit credit to entry age normal. Makes changes regarding excess earnings to be applied to the Unfunded Accrued Liability (UAL) and the Experience Account, and makes changes regarding the payment of cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs).	Passed Senate 38-0 House Retirement
SB 30	Cortez	LASERS	LASERS technical corrections regarding spousal consent, survivors' benefits, and post Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP) contribution rates.	Passed Senate 33-0 House Retirement

COLAs & SUPPLEMENTAL COLAs

HB 30	Jones	LASERS	Provides a 1.5 percent COLA for eligible retirees, survivors, and beneficiaries.	House Retirement – Failed to Pass
HB 34	Jones	LASERS	Provides a supplemental benefit increase (amount is to be determined) payable from the Experience Account.	House Retirement – Voluntarily Deferred
HB 84	Jackson	LASERS	Provides a supplemental benefit increase (amount is to be determined) payable from the Experience Account.	House Retirement – Not Heard in Committee
HB 85	Jackson	LASERS	Provides a 1.5 percent COLA for eligible retirees, survivors, and beneficiaries.	House Retirement – Not Heard in Committee
SB 18	Guillory	LASERS	Provides a 1.5 percent COLA for eligible retirees, survivors, and beneficiaries.	Passed Senate 38-0 House Floor
SB 27	Walsworth	LASERS	Provides a supplemental benefit increase (amount is to be determined) payable from the Experience Account.	Senate Retirement – Voluntarily Deferred

SPECIFIC SITUATIONS

HB 64	Havard	LASERS	Provides that therapeutic corrections guards and officers employed at the Eastern Louisiana Mental Health System are eligible for membership in the Hazardous Duty Services Plan.	House Appropriations
HB 78	Montoucet	LASERS	Provides for additional and retroactive retirement benefits for adult probation and parole officers employed on or before December 31, 2001.	House Retirement – Failed to Pass
HB 93	Shadoin	LASERS	Authorizes certain judges to transfer service credit from the District Attorneys' Retirement System to LASERS without cost.	Withdrawn
SB 15	Ward	LASERS	Allows the surviving spouse of a judge who dies while in active service to select the Initial Benefit Option (IBO) if the judge was eligible to receive a benefit equal to 100 percent of their average compensation, and was eligible to select IBO.	Senate Retirement

Obtain full Legislative bill details at www.lasersonline.org/Legislative_Issues_2014

2014 Mid-Legislative Update As of 05.07.14

Updates continued from page 2

HARBOR POLICE

HB 1278 (Substitute Bill for HB 79)	Pearson	LASERS & Harbor Police	Provides for enrollment of new hires of the Harbor Police Department of the Port of New Orleans in the Hazardous Duty Services Plan and for administration of the Harbor Police Retirement System by LASERS.	House Floor Set for May 7
--	---------	------------------------	--	---------------------------

PLAN CHANGES

HB 25 HB 45 HB 81	Talbot Seabaugh Landry	LASERS & TRSL	Prohibits membership in LASERS for employees of a primary health center established under federal law whose first date of employment is on or after September 1, 2014.	Pending in House
HB 38	Pearson	LASERS, TRSL, & LSERS	Changes retirement eligibility for new hires only on or after July 1, 2015, (excluding the Hazardous Duty Services Plan) to five years of service at age 62.	Passed House 91-3 Passed Senate 37-0
HB 40	Pearson	State Systems	Zeros out the Experience Account after payment of the July 1, 2014, COLA. Any funds remaining in the Experience Account shall be applied to the Original Amortization Base.	House Retirement – Failed to Pass
HB 80	Miller	State, Statewide, & Harbor Police	Provides relative to investments, setting specific allocation limits, and prohibiting leverage in purchase of direct real estate.	House Retirement
HB 86	Ivey	State Systems	Changes the allocation investment earnings in excess of the LASERS actuarially assumed rate of return.	House Retirement – Failed to Pass
HB 1225	Robideaux	State Systems	Provides relative to payment of system liabilities, credits to the Experience Account, and payment of COLAs.	Passed House 94-0

OTHER INSTRUMENTS of INTEREST

HB 1094	Fannin	LASERS & TRSL	Appropriates funds to LASERS and TRSL to be applied to the IUALs of the systems in accordance with Article 7, Section 10(D)(2)(b)(ii) of the Constitution.	House Appropriations Set for May 12
HCR 33	H. Burns	All Retirement Systems	Memorializes Congress to reduce or eliminate the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO).	House Floor – Adopted Senate Retirement
HSR 1	Pearson	State Systems	Requests that the House Committee on Retirement study allowing the deferral of retirement benefits to a later age as is done in Social Security.	Passed
HSR 2	Pearson	State Systems	Requests that the House Committee on Retirement study optional lump-sum pension buyouts for certain state retirement system members.	Passed
SB 26	Guillory	State Systems	Provides for the assessment of employer contributions to fund projected non-investment related administrative expenses for each of the state retirement systems.	Senate Finance
SB 673	Guillory	LASERS, TRSL, & LSERS	Repeals the provisions of the Cash Balance Plan which was declared unconstitutional.	Senate Retirement – Voluntarily Deferred
SCR 5	Guillory	All Retirement Systems	Memorializes Congress to reduce or eliminate the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO).	Passed Senate 38-0 House Retirement

Obtain full Legislative bill details at www.lasersonline.org/Legislative_Issues_2014



From the Desk of
Cindy Rougeou
 LASERS Executive Director

LASERS mission is to provide a sound retirement plan for our members through prudent management and exceptional service. In fulfilling this mission, we are intent on improving services while at the same time increasing efficiencies and reducing costs.

I think you will be pleased to know that over a two-year period, LASERS has reduced costs by over \$800,000. We have accomplished this through better use of automation, improving processes, and by ensuring that any overpayment of benefits is efficiently discovered and recouped.

We have also been expanding services to our members. Through the use of webinars and group sessions, LASERS retirement education division has expanded our outreach to both members and member agencies. On our website, members can sign up for current updates through [Member Connection](#). This feature has proven particularly valuable during legislative sessions. We are also keeping you informed via [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). We

recently launched [LASERS podcasts](#) that will focus on varying topics of interest, including financial planning.

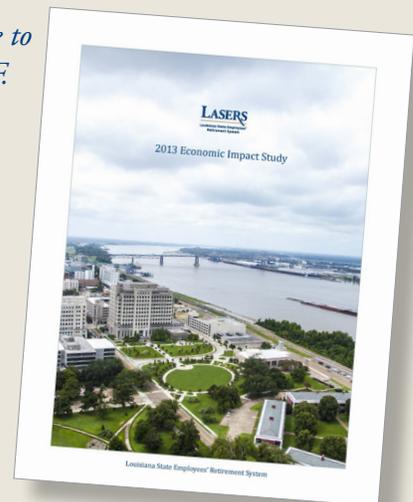
Not to be overlooked is LASERS major emphasis on “Going Green in 2014.” We have significantly reduced our printing volume both internally and externally. Nearly 3,000 of our members have already signed up for the [paperless BEAM](#). And all of our publications are available on our website, reducing our publication costs significantly.

If you have not visited our website, www.lasersonline.org, I encourage you to do so. You will find a wealth of information, including several educational video vignettes ranging in topics from [Countdown to Retirement](#) to the [Social Security Offsets](#). LASERS is always seeking better ways to keep our members informed. Through the use of technology and social media, we have enhanced our delivery of exceptional service to our members. Please provide us with your feedback on these services by taking the “[Rate our Website](#)” survey on the homepage or by clicking on “[Ask LASERS](#)” to send an email. We look forward to hearing from you!

The Board MEMO continued from page 1

- Benefits paid to LASERS beneficiaries in FY 2013 supported \$1.27 billion in economic activity/output in Louisiana.
- Since our members do not participate in Social Security, LASERS retirement benefits create economic security for tens of thousands of individuals who have devoted a career to public service.
- LASERS manages approximately one-third of its investments in-house, saving enough in fees this year to fully offset the amount budgeted for the salaries of our entire staff.

Click the image to view the PDF.



When retirees spend their benefit income, it fuels the economy in Louisiana and the economic footprint is seen in all 64 parishes. Check the impact in your parish on page 11 of the report. I am proud to serve as a Trustee of an organization that strives for prudent management and financial soundness. LASERS is managed in an efficient and strategic manner, and we are here to provide guidance and oversight. I encourage legislators, LASERS members, the media, and taxpayers to study the facts about our System and spread the word regarding our accomplishments. LASERS is a positive for Louisiana!



RSEA Announces Trip to Pigeon Forge



September 7-12, 2014

For more details:

[View the RSEA Trip to Pigeon Forge ITINERARY](#)
(Download PDF 220 KB)

[View the RSEA Trip to Pigeon Forge OFFICIAL FLYER](#)
(Download PDF 284 KB)



LASERS Deputy Director Elected Vice-President of LAPERS

LASERS Deputy Director Maris LeBlanc was elected Vice-President of the Louisiana Association of Public Employees' Retirement System (LAPERS) Board of Directors at its annual meeting on March 13. LAPERS is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that brings together individuals employed by state, statewide, and local public employees' pension plans to exchange information, ideas, and experiences with others facing the same challenges. Organized in 1985, LAPERS has 21 member systems representing more than 358,000 employees and retirees and \$40.1 billion in assets.

LeBlanc has been part of the LASERS management team since 2006. She is the former Deputy General Counsel for the Louisiana Ethics Administration and former Executive Counsel to the Commissioner of Administration. She is currently Vice-President of the Coalition to Preserve Retirement Security (CPRS) Board of Directors.

MEET THE Faces OF LASERS

Do You Know An Outstanding State Employee?

Public Employees are instrumental in the function of state government. There are over 350 state agencies in Louisiana and LASERS features exemplary employees with various roles as a "Face of LASERS." To nominate a worthy LASERS member, complete the nomination form on the LASERS website: www.lasersonline.org/FacesNominate.

Both active and retired members may be nominated, so take this opportunity to recognize an outstanding civil servant within your agency. [Read about previously featured members here.](#)



Check out Member Self-Service

Click the image to check out Member Self-Service and view all of the available features.

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Do You Have Unclaimed Property?

Unclaimed Property is lost money that is turned over to the state from a variety of sources, including payroll checks, old bank accounts, royalties, utility deposits, interest payments, stock certificates, and life insurance proceeds.

Currently over 7,000 LASERS members are on the Unclaimed Property list with unclaimed monies totaling over \$3.7 million. This can be the result of a member's failure to cash a benefit or refund check or contributions left with the retirement system by former state employees.

To find out if you may be eligible for a refund in unclaimed monies, visit the Louisiana Department of the Treasury website, www.LATreasury.com, or call the Treasury's Toll-Free hotline at 1.888.925.4127 (Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.). You can also check for your name on the LASERS website at www.lasersonline.org/unclaimed_property.

LASERS Stay Connected



Facebook

www.facebook.com/LASERSonline.org



YouTube

www.youtube.com/LASERSchannel



Twitter

www.twitter.com/LASERSonline



eBeam

www.laserasebeam.blogspot.com



Build Your Nest Egg Tips from Great-West Financial®

Investing Early Can Make All the Difference



Click the image to view the PDF.

Get a head start on retirement by beginning early in your career. The comparison, located in the image to the left, shows the difference between investing early as opposed to starting later in life. This information could enhance your nest egg and help build a supplement to your regular retirement.

Keep in mind that the tips provided by Great-West Financial are strictly voluntary and have no direct connection to your LASERS defined benefit retirement plan.

Rate Our Website



Please take a minute to rate our website. Your feedback is important and can help us improve service to our members. Thank you!

Click the image to take the survey.

The Louisiana State Employees' Retirement System (LASERS) distributed this document digitally. No publication costs were incurred.

In an effort to go green, we encourage you to subscribe to receive *The Beam* newsletter via email. As a subscriber, you will receive *The Beam* directly in your email inbox and no longer receive a paper copy. Subscribing to the Paperless Beam will reduce paper usage and cut printing cost. **Subscribe to the Paperless Beam now.**