TUARA Legislative Committee, interested friends and newsletter editor:

“Martha Rogers” <mrogers37@bellsouth.net>, “Gene Byrd” < byrd@bama.ua.edu>,"Dennis James" <dcjames797@comcast.net>, "Jerry Hoffman" <jaclhoffman@comcast.net>, “Janice Charlesworth” < jcharlesworth@aerainc.org>, "Betsy Graham" <egraham1949@gmail.com>, “Tom Rogers” <dtrogers@bellsouth.net>, "Dianne Teague" dteague@aalan.ua.edu, "Dennis James" <dcjames797@comcast.net>

State legislation remarks for TUARA newsletter. June 23, 2011

The 2011 legislative session had many controversial bills such as the increase of state employee contributions to retirement. From the June 20 AEA *Alabama School Journal*, there is legislation from the recent session which could directly affect retirees. SB 412**,** the Senate version of HB 525, was a bill to change the TRS from an elected board by the members of the retirement system to an appointed board. This bill failed but the proposal may be revived in the future.

Also, an education budget was passed which increased the costs of PEEHIP for retirees under 65. Substantial additional PEEHIP costs for those under 65 will apply to those who retire beginning Jan. 1, 2012. If you know someone who is thinking about retiring and is not yet eligible for Medicare, they should consider doing so before the end of 2011. The cost savings could be very significant over the interval until entering Medicare at 65. Along with other information, a retiree calculator will be available at the Retirement Systems of Alabama web site, www.rsa-al.gov . Go to “What’s New with PEEHIP”. The provisions of the bill (Act 2011-704) will be in the calculator to provide employees with an estimate of their monthly premium if they were to retire either before or after December 31, 2011. To retire prior to the effective date of the new law, the latest date you may submit your retirement application to the RSA is Tuesday, November 1, 2011, for a December 1, 2011, retirement date. Current retirees under 65 beginning Oct. 1 will see an increase of $5-$10 per month. For questions not answered on the site or for those not “on the web”, one can call 1 877 517 0020 to reach the PEEHIP insurance office or refer to the paper copy of the *PEEHIP Advisor* newsletter.

Here are other useful legislative web sites for retirees. The AEA site http://www.myaea.org/ has a lot of information. Click on “Divsions” then “Retired Division” The current paper copy of the *Alabama School Journal* can be more up-to-date than the web site. Some *Journal* items are in http://blog.al.com/school-journal/politics/index_2.html . Again for questions not answered on the site or for those not “on the web”, one can call 1-800-392-5839.

You can identify your legislators (via your zip code), get contact info and even send emails in the myaea.org site link https://ssl.capwiz.com/nea/al/directory/statedir.tt?state=AL&lvl=state There is a similar “locator” link on the Alabama Legislature web site (http://www.legislature.state.al.us/). There is a link with “bare bones information” on the progress of bills by entering their designation e.g. HB 525, in the Legislature site “Find Current Instrument” box. Abstracts and key word searches can be found on the Alabama Legislative Information System Online (ALISON) link (http://www.legislature.state.al.us/acas/alisonstart.html) under “legislative” on the Legislature web site.