



PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED STATE EMPLOYEES

State Association Office

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February 2025

President's Report - Winter 2025

Dear PARSE Member:

I trust that you had a safe and enjoyable holiday and thawed out after our deep freeze in these last weeks.

What follows are some details on what has been happening in the PARSE organization and what we will be working on this year.

1. In November I attended a conference hosted by AMBA and had the opportunity to meet with people from other state retiree organizations. It is no consolation, but those organizations have been having the same problems we have encountered with COLA legislation. We are not alone. However, we are not giving up on our efforts. New COLA legislation has just been introduced as HB411. See the attached sheet for how you can help get this legislation passed! The unfunded liability issue of the pension fund has not evaporated and will remain the challenge for any legislation. (I reviewed the background of the unfunded liability issue in a prior newsletter).
2. If you have called our insurance administrator recently you may have noticed that they now identify themselves as AMBA. This was communicated to policy holders of record last Fall. As a reminder please be assured that nothing has changed. You will still use the same phone number to call 1-800-382-1352, they still have the same location (on Hartzdale Rd in Camp Hill).
3. PARSE finished 2024 with 38,000 members, a new high. Financially we ended our Fiscal Year (FY) with a net income.
4. **AETNA did not issue new ID cards as previously announced, continue to use your current card. We will notify you when new cards will be sent.**
5. We have selected a firm for the Risk Analysis Audit for the State Office. That "Engagement Letter" is in the final review process and the plan is to have a report for the Governing Board in September. There will also be the annual "internal audit" which will begin in March.
6. We are actively working with a vendor to develop a new website for PARSE. Some of the objectives for the new are site :(a) have the site present better on all media (phone, tablet and PC), (b) make the site secure so you see a "https" when you visit the site. We also want to have a link on the site to various Webinars that might be of interest to members. More information will be made available as the site comes closer to being ready for use.
7. Communication via email is faster, more efficient and less costly than traditional snail mail. If you change your email address, please notify the State office.
8. The Office of Administration has advised us that the contract with Health Advocate will not be renewed. PEBTF (1-800-522-7279) should be called for any issues that previously would have gone to Health Advocate.
9. As a reminder, AMBA has insurance products other than dental and vision insurance available to PARSE members. **I want to emphasize however that because you talk to or meet with an AMBA representative on any of these other insurances you are under no obligation to purchase a product.**

10. You should have received a mailing from Aetna on benefit enhancements for 2025; of interest our to members is the "New for 2025 – Vision benefit". This new benefit offers a \$175 reimbursement every 24 months for prescription lenses, frames, or contact lenses. The following information is presented for your information as you evaluate your PARSE Davis vision insurance and the Aetna benefit

As an Aetna PPO member:

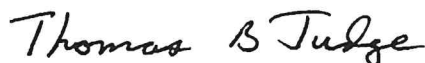
- A. Refraction – covered once every 12 months if done with the regular eye exam, no copay.
- B. Prescription lenses, frames, or contact lenses - \$175 every 24 months.
- C. You submit a claim for the reimbursement. If the entire \$175 is not used with a claim the balance is carried forward.
- D. The \$175 reimbursement can be used for any costs not covered by any other insurance.
- E. The current Aetna contract is good through 2026, and it is not known if this benefit will be offered with the next contract.

As a Davis Vision Insurance member:

- A. Refraction – covered once every 12 months.
- B. Prescription lenses, frames, or contact lenses – coverage every 12 months or 24 months depending on policy. Reimbursement varies depending on what frames, lenses, options (from \$0 to \$140). Contact lens coverage is \$85 every 12 or 24 months depending on the plan selected.
- C. As noted above, the AETNA PPO \$175 reimbursement can be applied to any frames, lenses, or contact lenses costs not covered by Davis.

Please continue to enjoy your retirement and know that PARSE is here to support.

Sincerely,



Tom Judge, PARSE President

COLA Legislation Introduced

ACT NOW

House Bill HB411 was introduced on Thursday January 29, 2025!

This bill is like HB1416 that we worked on in the last legislative session, it proposed a COLA for those who retired prior to July 2001. That session expired at the end of 2024. PARSE and NOVAK have been working to have new legislation introduced. The introduction of the bill is just the first step. We believe that there is the opportunity in both the House and Senate to get a bill passed in this session first in the House and then in the Senate. You can assist in that effort by contacting your representatives and senators.

Elected officials are more likely to respond when they hear from constituents. You can either send a letter or call your local representative or senator's office. At the bottom of this page, you will find links to both the House and Senate to get contact information for your elected officials.

Below are some points you might mention in either your letter or phone call. If you do call, please be friendly and courteous and calmly state why you want that official to support a COLA.

1. As with most people in the United States I am experiencing the challenges of inflation.
2. Simply providing essentials to live at times requires a choice between medicines and groceries.
3. I devoted my working career to supporting the citizens of PA.
4. I lived in PA throughout my life and most of my Commonwealth wages went back into the local and state economies. Similarly, my pension supports those same local and state economies.
5. I understand the Unfunded Liability problem but please remember that the employees/retirees did not cause that issue and should not be held hostage to something we did not cause.
6. HB411 will help retirees with everyday needs, not luxuries.
7. I ask you to do the right thing and support HB411 and encourage your colleagues to do so also.
8. Finish your letter or call with a thank you to the elected official for their service to the Commonwealth and their time reviewing your concerns.

- How to find your Representative: <https://www.house.state.pa.us>.

- How to find your Senator: <https://www.pasen.gov>