

# MEA-Retired Tribune

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February, 2024

## Hooray for events that highlight pension tax rollback

The pension tax rollback was rolled out in January with MEA-Retired activists being involved in several events in January. Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and a few state legislators spoke at the state AARP office in Lansing on Jan. 9 with the MEA-Retired leadership team and members Barb Schram and Liz Hubert in attendance.

Several dozen MEA-Retired members, including Secretary-Treasurer Jeanne Hansen, heard the governor at the Grand Rapids area MEA office on Jan. 11. Additional speakers included MEA Vice President Brett Smith and 80<sup>th</sup> District State Rep. Phil Skaggs (D), and the Governor was introduced by MEA-Retired President Kay Walker Telma.

MEA-Retired Board Member Isabell Nazar was in Grand Rapids for the event and praised the Governor and pro-public education legislators for their work to get the legislation in place. “Having \$1000 back to spend on basic needs will be an absolute godsend to people,” she said.

Round tables that included everyone from retired union members to first responders the following week provided the opportunity to discuss the importance of the rollback with state officials. MEA-Retired Vice President Judy Daley and Calhoun County Chapter President Vivian Davis joined a discussion with Gov. Whitmer and first responders at a Saginaw fire station.

“It was a lively discussion among several retired public employees from all racial and ethnic concerns. I think [the Governor] was pleased with the suggestions and comments,” said Davis. “\$500 to \$1000 are significant in everyone's monthly account. The bottom line is taxes should not be paid for previously earned income.”

The same day, Grand Traverse Bay Area Chapter members Nancy Coscarelli, Kathy DiPisa and Kathy Mead met with local International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers officials and others in Traverse City for a conversation with Lt. Governor Gilchrist.

“All the pension recipients in attendance had time to share our stories about the negative impact of the unanticipated retirement taxes we’ve paid for over a decade now. Though many of us expressed dismay at the years-long phase in of the repeal, we are grateful that Lansing finally got us the relief we need,” said Coscarelli.

Many thanks to the dozens of members who participated in these important events, and a special thanks to MEA-Retired Board Member and NEA-Retired State PAC Captain Bridget Fox for all of her work on the Grand Rapids event.

Thanks to our pro-public education Governor, Lt. Governor and Legislature the rollback, and thanks to all of YOU for your votes that helped make this happen.

## Scholarship reading dates changed; volunteers wanted

MEA has re-scheduled the scholarship reading sessions to March 11 – 14, 2024 in the MEA Steven Cook Board Room (located in the 1350 Building). Please note that this does coincide with our MEA-Retired Board of Directors meeting on March 13 as well.

If anyone is interested, and/or available, you can reach out to Sofia Henderson in MEA Human Resources by email at [shenderson@mea.org](mailto:shenderson@mea.org).

## Get ready to vote in the annual MEA-Retired election Feb. 5-16

Most of you have already reviewed the new voting instructions and have set up your MEA Members Only Login. Members may prepare in advance for voting by ensuring that their MEA Members Only Login has been created. Instructions for creating an account or resetting a password can be found in the attached MEA Members Only Login guide. Please set up your logins ASAP; we also encourage you to log in BEFORE the election begins so you can update their email & password if needed.

The Online Voting Quick Reference guide will provide you with both the voting link (<https://mymea.org/voting/vote>) and instructions to cast your ballot once voting has opened.

**From uspis.gov:**

### **SMISHING: Package tracking text scams**

***NOTE FROM KAY: I received one of these texts earlier this week, was skeptical and did not open it. I decided to do some research and now know a new word: smishing.***

Have you received unsolicited mobile text messages with an unfamiliar or strange web link that indicates a USPS delivery requires a response from you? If you never signed up for a USPS tracking request for a specific package, then ***don't click the link!*** This type of text message is a scam called smishing.

Smishing is a form of phishing that involves a text message or phone number. Victims will typically receive a deceptive text message that is intended to lure the recipient into providing their personal or financial information. These scammers often attempt to disguise themselves as a government agency, bank, or other company to lend legitimacy to their claims. USPS utilizes the 5-digit short codes to send and receive SMS to and from mobile phones.

The criminals want to receive personally identifiable information (PII) about the victim such as: account usernames and passwords, Social Security number, date of birth, credit and debit card numbers, personal identification numbers (PINs), or other sensitive information. This information is used to carry out other crimes, such as financial fraud.

The Postal Service offers free tools to track specific packages, but customers are required to either register online, or initiate a text message, and provide a tracking number. USPS does not charge for these services! USPS will not send customers text messages or e-mails without a customer first

requesting the service with a tracking number, **and it will NOT contain a link**. So, if you did not initiate the tracking request for a specific package directly from USPS and it contains a link: **don't click the link!**

If you suspect the text message you have received is suspicious but are expecting a parcel, please do not click on any links. Rather, report it and visit USPS.com from your mobile device or computer for tracking and additional resources.

For more information about these services and other products, please visit [USPS TEXT TRACKING FAQs](#): To protect yourself and others from consumer frauds, [visit our fraud prevention page](#).

#### **HOW TO REPORT USPS Related SMISHING:**

To report USPS related smishing, send an email to [spam@uspis.gov](mailto:spam@uspis.gov).

- Without clicking on the web link, copy the body of the suspicious text message and paste into a new email.
- Provide your name in the email, and also attach a screenshot of the text message showing the phone number of the sender and the date sent.
- Include any relevant details in your email, for example: if you clicked the link, if you lost money, if you provided any personal information, or if you experienced any impacts to your credit or person.
- The Postal Inspection Service will contact you if more information is needed.
- Forward the smishing/text message to 7726 (this will assist with reporting the scam phone number).

Complaints of **non-USPS** related smishing can also be sent to any of the following law enforcement partners of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service:

- Forward to 7726 (this will assist with reporting the scam phone number).
- Report fraud to the [Federal Trade Commission](#).
- The Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI), [Internet Crime Complaint Center \(ic3\)](#)

**REMINDER: Make sure to vote in Michigan's Presidential Primary  
Tuesday, February 27, 2024!**