

Gov't Relations at Work Despite Virus Pandemic

by Susan Dixon

State Government Relations Chair

"The future is uncertain . . . but this uncertainty is at the very heart of human creativity." - Ilya Prigogine

How the last few weeks have changed our world. It's still hard to comprehend how quickly our lives were turned upside down. Suddenly hotels, restaurants, retail stores and non-essential services and travel were shut down. With a heavy heart CalRTA canceled its long-awaited Advocacy Day on March 17.

Although many things stopped, CalRTA leadership and committees continue to work together. The Government Relations Committees quickly scheduled virtual meetings and moved forward with reviewing state and federal legislation.

The Government Relations Committee met on-line on March 23 and 30 to review and vote on 40 state retirement, healthcare, and education funding bills related to the CalRTA platform. The committee also reviewed eight circulating initiatives with 25% of signatures reached. We also met for the GRC monthly virtual meeting and planned the future advocacy activities.

In March, the Legislative Alerts were temporarily halted; in their place is "What's Up Wednesday." I began by writing the first week of "What's Up Wednesday" alert to provide all CalRTA members with an activity for them as they shelter in place. The alerts have been well received: I receive regular feedback and new ideas from members throughout the state for the upcoming weekly Wednesday Alerts.

It is important that all members know that we have **not** stopped pursuing repeal of the unjust Social Security penalties. During the last few weeks I have been communicating with the staffs of Representative

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photo courtesy of Dr. Susan Toma-Berge

Scholarship recipient Danielle Cheung and UCI's Dr. Susan Toma-Berge display the Laura E. Settle Scholarship.

Settle Scholarship Awarded

by Barbara Yahn

Scholarships Chair

Division 42 of CalRTA is honored to celebrate Danielle Cheung, recipient of the Laura E. Settle Scholarship for 2019-2020.

Danielle attended school in Long Beach, both private and public. She attended Wilson High School where she was a member of the Distinguished Scholars Program and graduated with high honors.

She went on to attend CSULB as a sociology major and graduated Magna Cum Laude. UCI was her choice to continue her Multiple Subject + MAT Program where Danielle volunteered to serve as one of the student representatives.

Danielle credits her teachers with encouraging her to follow her dreams even when things in her life were difficult. She hopes to inspire her own students to achieve their dreams and to never give up.

We at Division 42 and CalRTA offer our congratulations to Danielle Cheung for receiving this outstanding award.

Updates

Just Checking In . . .

How are you all coping during this time of lockdown and social distancing? Your CalRTA friends want to know.

We have started a phone tree to call members and check in on them, to see if any need any help and to just make connections in a time when we need them more than ever. Don't be surprised if you receive a call or email from one of our friendly phone tree captains: **Marcia Jones, Doreen Lohnes, Sally White, Irene Fascher, Chris McLaren, Deborah Morris, Suzie Dixon or Charlotte Takahashi.**

-Sally White, Government Relations Chair

New Members

Welcome to new members since January, 2020: **Teri Lee Jones-Castro, Carol Woolston, Elizabeth Malone, April Burr Adams, Patti Ann Burke-Pratley, Eugene Broadwater, Carmen Hensley, Randy Bailey, Diane Poettgen, Kathleen Parsons Vick, Kathleen Wood, and Donna Udany.**

You are the life blood of CalRTA Division 42. We hope that you are able to join us at the next general meeting and lunch in the fall.

-Joan Fessenden, Treasurer

Day of the Teacher

We have cancelled the delivery of the Teacher Appreciation bags of pens and CalRTA literature. The National Day of the Teacher is May 5th, and it appears schools will still be closed then.

The bags have been assembled, so we will either deliver them in the Fall or wait until the Day of the Teacher in May, 2021. Thanks to all of the wonderful members who volunteered to deliver the bags.

-Karen Kirby, Day of the Teacher Chair

In Memoriam

We will miss these Div. 42 members who have recently died: **Helen House and Martha Marino.** May they rest in peace.

-Joan Fessenden, Treasurer

You Can Assist

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Rodney Davis (R. Illinois), the author of H.R. 141, Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Representative Mike Levin. Only last week Representative Levin held a Zoom meeting with myself and six state leaders of CalRTA. We have listened to our elected officials and are starting another push for repeal of the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO) penalties. Beginning in April there are two new alerts that are asking elected officials to suspend the penalties or add a provision of H.R. 141 to upcoming stimulus bills.

All Members: Participate! New Weekly Alert Schedule

1. Take Action Tuesday – Contact members of the Bi-Partisan Women's Caucus to request they co-sponsor and enact H.R. 141.

2. What's Up Wednesday – Alert provides activities and links for members to stay connected.

3. Urgent Alert Thursday – Alert request H.R. 141 be added to stimulus bill or request suspension of Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset penalties.

I cannot stress enough how important it is for **all** of our members to act on the weekly alerts. If you are not receiving the alerts via email, please email Johanna Hobbs johanna@calrta.org. All of the alerts are archived on the calrta.org/advocacy-action section.

The CalRTA Government Relations Committee is working with other retiree groups; we hosted a virtual meeting April 23rd for the Retired Educators Group. We are asking all of the groups to join our Legislative Alerts and to sign on to a letter addressing the need for H.R. 141 to be added to a stimulus package.

The CalRTA Board of Directors has also held special board meetings online. With the continued uncertainty concerning our ability to have large gatherings in the future, the Board of Directors has decided to cancel the Delegate convention in June.

The Directors will continue to meet virtually and conduct business. I want to reassure you that your CalRTA Government Relations Committee is working hard to meet the challenges facing us during this health crisis. Stay home and stay healthy.

President's Message

by Marcia Jones
President, Div. 42



I hope that this message finds you healthy, safe, and happy in your homes as we face this unprecedented pandemic in our lifetimes. We all are in this together, and as CalRTA members, YOU are very important to us. Our efforts to support our pensions are ongoing during this time. As you probably are aware, work to attain Social Security fairness by repealing the WEP/GPO is also a continuing focus.

One of the ways our members have been reaching out is through phone calls to check on the welfare of other members. If you haven't been contacted yet, your call is coming . . . that is, if we have the correct phone number.

Many phone numbers are disconnected and/or incorrect. As I have mentioned before, if there have been changes in your address or phone numbers, it would help us greatly if you could update these on the CalRTA.org website. We want to be able to stay connected with all of our members, perhaps now more than ever before. That is the reason that the Board decided to put out this newsletter, small as it is.

Finally, we all need to stay the course, as difficult as it is. My hardest challenge is not seeing my now 3 month old granddaughter. I have missed her and her family terribly. I know that many of you can identify with this! I also miss my hairdresser. (See fake photo.)

So how have I been dealing with that?

I have been reading; listening to virtual symphonies/choruses and other music; streaming television shows; having FaceTime/Zoom chats with friends and family; doing a 500 piece puzzle (a first for me since I'm not a fan of puzzles!); getting some exercise; and traveling to the kitchen more often than I should!

But through all of this I am grateful for all the positive love and caring we see from the stories we hear from far and near. And don't forget: laughter is the best medicine, even under these dire circumstances. I advise all of you to find humor often and laugh! I hope to see many of you in the fall when our luncheon meetings may resume and when we will be back to sending you our usual eight page newsletter.

Help Us 'Give Back'

by Shirley Sauvageau
Giving Back Chair

Division 42 has traditionally selected two classroom educators on donorschoose.org who were planning special projects for students, projects that were not provided for in their school budgets. Recently it has become more difficult to locate on that web site those teachers looking for help.

If you know of educators looking for financial support, please send their name and contact information to shirleysauvageau@gmail.com.

We have approximately 30 schools where we have yet to Give Back in the three districts we honor: Capo, Saddleback and Laguna Beach. The deadline is October 1, as we will be delivering during National Retired Teachers Week in November.

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Giving Back	Shirley Sauvageau
Publicity/Historian	(open)
Decorations	(open)
Phone Tree	Merry Lou Rodarmel
Newsletter Editor	Kris Evans-Degen

Area X Officers from Div. 42

President	Becky Carroll
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State Officers from Div. 42

Government Relations	Susan Dixon
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