

## THE BEAM

## MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER

The LASERS Vision: *Confidence in our service, assuring financial security for your future.*

## 2025 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature LASERS TRACKING RETIREMENT LEGISLATION

LASERS is tracking additional bills beyond those listed below. For the full list of retirement legislation that could impact our System, visit [www.lasersonline.org/2025-legislative-session](http://www.lasersonline.org/2025-legislative-session).

The **2025 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature** will convene on **Monday, April 14**. The following bills would impact LASERS if passed:

### **SB 7 – Hodges** | *Systems Impacted: All*

#### **BOARD POSITION: OPPOSE**

Requires third party service providers for public retirement systems to make investment decisions based solely on financial factors and sets limitations on proxy voting.

### **HB 8 – Glorioso** | *Systems Impacted: LASERS & MERS*

#### **BOARD POSITION: NEUTRAL**

Allows a member of MERS to retain membership in lieu of participation in LASERS.

### **HB 9 – Bagley** | *Systems Impacted: LASERS*

#### **BOARD POSITION: SUPPORT**

Permits any rank-and-file member regardless of age or first date of employment, to retire with 30 years of service credit.

### **HB 10 – Boyer** | *System Impacted: LASERS*

#### **BOARD POSITION: NEUTRAL**

Allows P.O.S.T.-certified law enforcement officers appointed by the Governor to return to work in an unclassified position with 25 years of service credit, reducing the current requirement from 30 years.

### **HB 63 – Green** | *System Impacted: LASERS*

#### **BOARD POSITION: NEUTRAL**

Proposes a constitutional amendment that, if approved by voters at the Nov. 3, 2026, election, would remove the mandatory retirement age (70) for judges and instead impose a mandatory retirement for judges who have attained 100% of their final average compensation.

For **live committee meetings, bill details, and daily schedules**, visit [www.legis.la.gov](http://www.legis.la.gov). LASERS will provide **updates** throughout the session on our website. You can also sign up for **email updates** or follow us on **Facebook and X @LASERSpension**. ■

#### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Amy A. Mathews  
2025 Board Chair  
225.342.1598

Ternisa Hutchinson  
2025 Board Vice Chair  
225.342.7407

Virginia Burton  
225.335.9653

Byron P. Decoteau, Jr.  
225.342.8272

Pam Diez  
225.342.6726

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225.505.3330

Cortny Jarrell  
225.342.2455

Laura Lapeze  
225.235.0212

Barbara McManus  
337.433.8910

Rep. Tony Bacala  
225.677.8020

Comm'r Taylor Barras  
225.342.7000

Hon. John C. Fleming, M.D.  
225.342.0055

Sen. Edward Price  
225.644.6738

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## LASERS JOINS INNOVATION PANEL AT SUPER BOWL LIX AS LOUISIANA LAUNCHES NEW TECH INITIATIVE

LASERS Chief Investment Officer Bobby Beale participated on a panel at the Super Bowl LIX Innovation Day event in February, contributing his expertise to discussions on innovation and economic development.

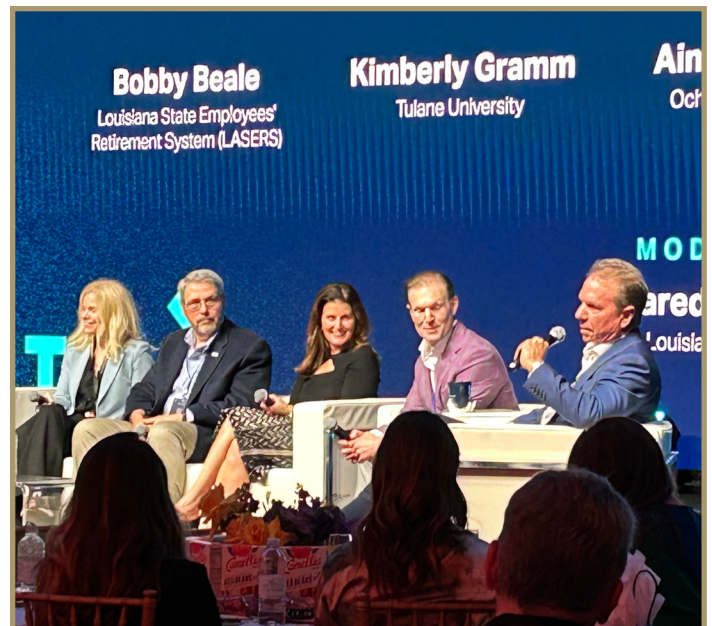
This event was also the platform for a significant announcement by Louisiana Economic Development (LED), which launched **Louisiana Innovation (LA.IO)**, a new division dedicated to fostering high-growth, technology-enabled startups across the state.

The initiative includes the establishment of the **Louisiana Growth Fund**, initially funded with \$50 million from federal sources, which will be matched by private equity and incubator partners to reach a total of \$100 million. This fund aims to support and scale technology-driven startups, bolstering Louisiana's position in the tech sector.

A key component of LA.IO is the **Louisiana Institute for Artificial Intelligence**, a 501c3 organization focused on applied AI research, development, commercialization, workforce training, and policy. Its first project involves upgrading 5,000 small businesses with AI tools to enhance their competitiveness and efficiency. This initiative aligns with Louisiana's broader strategy to attract and grow businesses, exemplified by Meta's \$10 billion

data center project in Richland Parish. By fostering connections and providing resources, LA.IO aims to create a vibrant innovation ecosystem, further positioning Louisiana as a leader in technological advancements.

To learn more, visit [LA.IO](https://la.io) and read the full [announcement](#) on LED's website. ■



*Bobby Beale (right) speaks at the Innovation Panel on Thursday, February 6 ahead of Super Bowl LIX in New Orleans.*

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## NOMINATIONS OPEN IN 2025 BOARD OF TRUSTEES ELECTION

Four seats on the LASERS Board of Trustees are up for election in 2025—**three for active members and one for retired members**. Every two years, LASERS members elect candidates to serve on the 13-member Board.

### KEY ELECTION DATES:

- **Nominations:** Opened in March and close on **July 8, 2025**
- **Voting:** Takes place in **September and October**

- **Results:** Certified by the Board, with newly elected Trustees announced in **November**

The **nomination petition** outlines candidate qualifications, campaign platform guidelines, trustee responsibilities, key deadlines, petition signature requirements, and photo submission instructions.

If you are interested in becoming a candidate, visit [www.lasersonline.org](https://www.lasersonline.org) to access the petitions, election rules, and full schedule of events. ■

# FROM THE DESK *of*



Trey Boudreaux, LASERS Executive Director

This time of year, our team is usually on the road, traveling across the state to provide updates at RSEA chapter meetings. However, I was

pleased to connect with members this year through the new virtual format, delivering important pension system updates via webinar to all attendees at once.

Here are some key takeaways from the LASERS presentation:

- **Asset Growth:** LASERS remains financially sound, with a fund value exceeding \$15 billion as of June 30, 2024.
- **Expedited Implementation of the Social Security Fairness Act:** Learn more about the timeline and implementation on **page 5**.
- **myLASERS:** The importance of using our online account management tool and the expansion of available documents.
- **Rehired Retirees:** Important information for those considering re-employment.

For additional resources from the presentation, visit [www.lasersonline.org/retirees/rsea-webinar-2025](http://www.lasersonline.org/retirees/rsea-webinar-2025).

## Navigating AI in the Workplace

Earlier this year, we introduced a new **AI User Policy** to ensure the responsible and secure use of artificial intelligence tools within LASERS. As AI becomes more integrated into our operations—through platforms like Perplexity, Asana, and Microsoft Copilot—we remain committed to educating employees on its workplace impact. The policy outlines authorized use, data security, confidentiality, and compliance with agency guidelines. Staff members authorized to use AI are required to sign a user agreement. Learn more about this policy on **page 4**.

## Stay Informed During Legislative Session

With the 2025 Legislative Session approaching, our Executive, Legal, and Investment teams will closely monitor retirement-related bills and attend committee meetings. To stay updated, I encourage you to sign up for **Member Connection emails** on our website. The email sign-up box is conveniently located on our homepage. ■

“LASERS remains financially sound, with a fund value exceeding \$15 billion...”



## Get the Numbers on Our Website

### New Investment Report

The latest **Annual Investment Report** is now available on our website. This report provides a thorough review of the System's asset allocation and performance, as well as the practices in place to sustain our pension plan. View the full report at [www.lasersonline.org/investments/reports](http://www.lasersonline.org/investments/reports).

### Investment Performance

Investment performance summaries are updated monthly at [www.lasersonline.org/investments/performance](http://www.lasersonline.org/investments/performance). View our actual asset allocation and target allocation by clicking on the **Asset Allocation** tab. ■





## LASERS INTRODUCES AI POLICY

As artificial intelligence (AI) continues to evolve, LASERS is proactively establishing guidelines to ensure its **responsible and secure use** in pension administration and member services.

Our newly implemented **AI User Policy** outlines **appropriate AI usage** within LASERS, covering key areas such as:

- **Authorized Use:** Who can access AI tools
- **Data Security & Confidentiality:** Protecting sensitive member information
- **Non-Personal Use:** Ensuring AI is used strictly for business purposes
- **Monitoring & Compliance:** Maintaining accountability in AI interactions

While AI offers valuable support in streamlining workflows, LASERS emphasizes that these tools should **enhance—not replace—human judgment** in decision-making.

Stay tuned for more updates on how LASERS is integrating AI responsibly to serve our members more efficiently. ■

## LASERS SUPPORTS CAPITAL AREA CASA

In January, the LASERS Fundraising Committee presented a check to **Capital Area CASA Director Allison Traxler**, contributing to the organization's vital mission. Thanks to generous support from our staff, LASERS raised in total **over \$6,400** for CASA in 2024 through various fundraising efforts.

Founded in 1992, the Capital Area CASA Association advocates for the timely placement of children in permanent, safe, and stable homes. LASERS is proud to support local charities and the great work they do for our community. ■



**10 YEARS**  
[AT LASERS]

*Celebrating*

**20 YEARS**  
[AT LASERS]



**REEVES PEARCE**  
[INVESTMENTS]



**MEGAN WADE**  
[FISCAL]



**JEANNE PENEGUY**  
[MEMBER SERVICES]



**CARLA WELCH**  
[MEMBER SERVICES]



**JANICE YOUNG**  
[MEMBER SERVICES]



**MARK DIAZ**  
[PUBLIC INFORMATION]



**WRETHA DRINNON**  
[FISCAL]



**LANEY SANDERS**  
[INVESTMENTS]

# THE BOARD MEMO



**Amy A. Mathews, 2025 Board Chair**

At the February Board meeting, I was honored to be elected **Chair of the Board for 2025**, alongside **Ternisa Hutchinson as Vice Chair**. With our extensive experience as Trustees and deep understanding of the LASERS mission, we

are committed to ensuring the System remains strong, fostering asset growth, and securing benefits for both current and future retirees.

Over the next year, we will continue to focus on key Board issues, including **preserving the defined benefit plan** and **maintaining Board autonomy** with its majority composition of elected active and retired members.

Speaking of significant issues, a major victory for our members is the passage of the **Social Security Fairness Act** in January, which repealed the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO). The LASERS Board has long supported reducing or eliminating these offsets, and we are thrilled to see this finally happen for our members.

After initially estimating that implementation could take up to a year, the Social Security Administration (SSA) recently announced an **accelerated timeline**:

- **Retroactive Payments:** Most eligible beneficiaries should have received a one-time payment in March 2025.
- **Monthly Benefit Increases:** Beneficiaries will see increased monthly **Social Security** payments starting in April 2025, reflecting the repeal of the WEP and GPO, which is retroactive to January 2024.
- **Beneficiary Outreach:** Ensure your contact information is up to date with the SSA for important updates.

It is important to note that the Social Security Fairness Act does **not** impact LASERS retirement benefits. Members with questions about their Social Security benefits should contact the **SSA directly**.

For more details and answers to frequently asked questions, visit the **SSA website** at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov). ■

*“...we are committed to ensuring the System remains strong, fostering asset growth, and securing benefits for both current and future retirees.”*



## *Comments from our Members*

*“LASERS staff has been so very helpful to me and the pursuit of my retirement.”*

**Yvette M.**

**Baton Rouge, LA**

*“Derek was very knowledgeable and put me at ease with the information provided about my retirement benefits.”*

**Denise G.**

**Gretna, LA**

*“Nelly was very helpful; front desk area was also very helpful.”*

**Joni L.**

**Independence, LA**



## Scholarship Opportunity from



RSEA is awarding \$1,000 scholarships to students attending an accredited Louisiana institution.

### Eligibility Requirements:

- Parent or grandparent must be an RSEA member for at least three consecutive years.
- Must be enrolled or accepted as a full-time student (12+ hours) with a **minimum 2.5 GPA**.
- Submit a **500-word statement** on educational/career goals.
- Provide a **written financial need statement** and **two reference letters** (*one from an academic advisor*).
- Include **ACT/SAT scores, school transcript, and signed application**.

### How to Apply:

Download the application at [www.rseala.org](http://www.rseala.org) and submit by **Friday, April 25** via mail or email:

- **Email:** [janthony.rsea@gmail.com](mailto:janthony.rsea@gmail.com)
- **Mail:** RSEA of Louisiana  
ATTN: Scholarship Foundation  
9412 Common St., Suite 7  
Baton Rouge, LA 70809-8414

For more information, contact Jimmy Anthony at 225.831.4988. ■

## ATTENTION

# ACTIVE MEMBERS

### THINKING ABOUT RETIRING THIS YEAR?

Retirement doesn't happen overnight—it's a process that requires **careful planning and collaboration** between you, your agency, and LASERS. To ensure a smooth transition, we recommend starting your retirement planning **12 to 18 months** before your planned retirement date.

A great place to begin is the **Ready to Retire** section on our website. Here, you will find essential resources, including:

- ✓ **Retirement Readiness Planner**
- ✓ **12-18 Month Checklist**
- ✓ **Important reminders about insurance coverage**
- ✓ **What to expect during the application process**

Check out these resources on our website at [www.lasersonline.org/members/ready-to-retire](http://www.lasersonline.org/members/ready-to-retire) to help ensure a successful retirement process. ■

### ATTEND A LASERS SEMINAR

When navigating your retirement journey, expert advice is key. Our seminars are a valuable resource for understanding your retirement options and planning effectively. We currently offer the following seminars:

- The **Calculating Your Benefit** seminar explains how your LASERS benefit is calculated, factors that may impact it, and how to create and understand retirement benefit estimates using myLASERS.
- The **PREP** seminar covers retirement eligibility requirements, how to purchase service credit, various retirement options, and more.
- The **DROP vs. IBO** seminar explains these two retirement options, their fundamental differences, how each is funded, when and how to apply, and more.
- The **Early-Career** seminar introduces members to LASERS and the defined benefit plan, steps you can take now to enhance your future retirement benefit, and more.

To register, go to [www.lasersonline.org](http://www.lasersonline.org) and click on "View All Seminars" to find the session that best fits your needs. ■

### ANNUAL STATEMENTS AVAILABLE IN MYLASERS

Your **annual member account statement** is now available in **myLASERS** under the **Documents** tab. This statement provides a summary of your **ars of service, contributions, and personal account details**.

Please review your statement carefully. If you have any questions or notice discrepancies, contact your agency's **Human Resources** office. ■



# ATTENTION RETIRED MEMBERS

## DROP RATE OF RETURN

The interest rate for eligible (non-Self Directed Plan) DROP accounts for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, is **7.76 percent**. This interest was posted to accounts in January.

The rate is determined using a five-year actuarially smoothed return and was approved by the Public Retirement Systems' Actuarial Committee in December.

Participants in the **Self-Directed Plan** do not receive this interest rate. Instead, their earnings or losses are based on investment allocations chosen through Empower.

For more details about DROP, visit the *Deferred Retirement Option Plan* chapter in the *Member's Guide to Retirement*. ■

## JUNE 1 BENEFIT PAYMENT FALLS ON A SUNDAY

Please note that the **June 1 benefit payment falls on a Sunday**, which could affect receipt of your funds.

Direct deposits are guaranteed to be in your bank or credit union on the **first day** of the month. Be aware that if the first falls on a weekend or holiday, funds may not be available until the following business day. In these cases, please contact your financial institution directly for information on when your funds will be made available to you. **That decision is made by your financial institution, not LASERS.**

If you have not received your monthly benefit payment by the first business day of the month, please contact LASERS. ■



## UPDATE YOUR DIRECT DEPOSIT & W-4P IN MYLASERS

Retirees can quickly and securely submit direct deposit and W-4P changes through myLASERS by following these simple steps:

1. Visit [www.mylasers.org](http://www.mylasers.org) and log into your account.
2. In the left-hand menu, select **eForms**.
3. Select the **Authorization for Direct Deposit** or **W-4P form**.
4. Fill in all required fields.
5. Electronically sign and submit the form(s) to LASERS. ■



## Easier Access to Important Documents

Retirees can now easily access previously distributed letters and forms in myLASERS. Recently added documents include:

- **W-4P:** Withholding Certificate for Pension or Annuity Payments
- **Minimum Required Distribution Letter:** Notification regarding required distributions
- **Minimum Required Distribution Request:** Form to request your required distribution

Log in to your **myLASERS** account at [www.mylasers.org](http://www.mylasers.org) to view these documents. ■

## Tax Form 1099-R Available

Form 1099-R for 2024 was mailed to retirees in January. You may also view your 1099-R information in myLASERS. To report an error or request a duplicate be mailed to you, please call us at 225.922.0600 (Baton Rouge) or 1.800.256.3000 (toll-free). If you have questions regarding your 1099-R, we suggest that you contact your tax advisor. ■



# ASK LASERS

## *Your Questions Answered*

**Q: I AM AN ACTIVE MEMBER, AND MY ACCOUNT SAYS I DO NOT HAVE A BENEFICIARY ON FILE. HOW DO I UPDATE THIS?**

**a:** You can update your beneficiary information through your **myLASERS** account by completing the **Designation of Beneficiary** eForm. Alternatively, you may fill out the **Designation of Beneficiary** form found under **Member Forms** on the LASERS website and submit it via fax or mail.

**Q: I AM A LASERS PAYEE, WHERE CAN I FIND A COPY OF MY MONTHLY BENEFIT BREAKDOWN?**

**a:** You can view your monthly benefit payment details, including deductions, in your **myLASERS** account. Simply go to the **Benefits** tab, select **Payment History**, and choose the month you want to review. You can also generate an **Income Verification** letter on demand for printing.

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

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