



# MSRB

## *Retiree eNews Bulletin*

### *MAY 2022*

#### **Retiree Benefit Verification (BVF) Mailing Coming in June**

The 2022 Benefit Verification Forms for retirees of the State Employees' Retirement System will be mailed soon.

**There will be no notarization requirement for the 2022 BVF, but your signature on the BVF will still have to be witnessed by someone over the age of eighteen.**

Note, the Board processes over 67,000 BVF's and will confirm receipt of an individual BVF starting TBD. In the meantime, members whose BVFs have been received and validated may receive a postcard that acknowledges receipt.

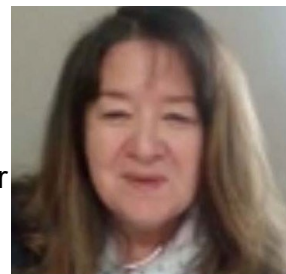
Also, for those who don't receive or return the first BVF, a second BVF will be issued. Be sure to check the Board's website, Facebook, and Twitter pages for the latest updates!

Anyone who received a pension benefit payment prior to 12/31/2021 will be included in the 2022 process. If your retirement date was in 2021, but you didn't get paid until 2022, you will not be included in the 2022 BVF process.

***Please note, during the verification process, your benefit payments will not be delayed or withheld without prior***

#### **Retirement Board Welcomes Maureen Valente as New Board Member!**

At the April meeting of the State Retirement Board, Massachusetts Treasurer & Receiver General Deborah Goldberg officially swore in Maureen



Valente as the appointed member of the Board for a 3-year term. Ms. Valente assumes the seat previously held by Ms. Patricia Deal, who recently stepped down.

Ms. Valente is the retired Chief Executive Officer of the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

The Board's elected members are Theresa McGoldrick and Frank Valeri. Its Chosen Member is Archie Gormley.

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#### **House Approves 5% COLA Increase**

As part of the FY 2023 Commonwealth Budget process, the Massachusetts House of Representatives included a one-time 5% cost-of-living adjustment ("COLA") for retirees of the State

***notification. Board staff will make every effort to contact members who do not return a BVF before withholding benefit payments.***

Please keep in mind the following when filling out your form:

1. Section 2 **MUST** be completed (signature required) by the member or the authorized agent (power of attorney (POA), guardian or conservator) acting on behalf of the member.
2. If an authorized agent completes the BVF, a full copy of the authorization document must be already on file with the Board or attached to the 2022 BVF. Section 4 (on the back) must also be completed.
3. Section 3 must be completed by your third-party witness, who is over the age of eighteen. Their name and signature must be legible. **Note, the member and witness signatures MUST have the SAME DATE.** (For 2022, the Board does not require the notarization of this form.)
4. **Please do not mail your completed form to the Board's offices. Instead, please mail your completed form to MSRB, PO Box 167, Randolph, MA 02368-0167.**

If there is a reason that would prevent you from completing a BVF, or if you need assistance, please contact our office at (617) 367-7770.

For more information and the latest updates, please click here:  
<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/biennial-benefit-verification-process-msrb>.

Employees' Retirement System and the Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement System.

A similar COLA amendment was filed as part of the Senate's budget deliberations but withdrawn. The proposed COLA changes will be discussed by the House and Senate as part of the Conference Committee process. If eventually approved by both Houses, and approved by the Governor, the COLA would go into effect on July 1, 2022.

You can follow the budget process on the Massachusetts Legislature website: <https://malegislature.gov/>.

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## **Stay Connected: Make an Appointment with Your SMART Retirement Plan Advisor**

It has never been easier to schedule a conversation with your SMART Plan Retirement Plan Advisors ("RPA") via an online meeting or a phone call. Appointments are generally available the same week you reach out and you can tackle plenty in your meeting even if you haven't met with an RPA before.

Your RPA can help you get the answers and personalized support needed to meet your retirement goals. Find your local representative and schedule an appointment directly from the website via the [SMART Plan Territory Map](#) or email [SMART@Empower.com](mailto:SMART@Empower.com), or if you prefer, just call 1-877-457-1900.

Your local Retirement Plan Advisor can:

- Review your retirement income needs and discuss whether your current spending and investing has you on track to meet your goals
- Work with you to decide whether

## May is Older Americans Month

According to the US Department of Health's Administration for Community Living's ("ACL") website, May is Older Americans Month. The theme for 2022 is "**Age My Way,**" which looks to provide an opportunity for individuals to explore the ways they can remain involved in their communities.

Board staff thanks all those who provide care and support to older adults.

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs promotes independence, empowerment, and well-being of older people, individuals with disabilities, and their families.

Elder Affairs supports older adults and individuals with disabilities to 'age in community' so they can live well and be safe. They provide access to quality aging and disability services through a partnership with regional, non-profit, and elder services agencies throughout the state.

For more information, resources, and links about aging in the community, visit their [website by clicking here](#).

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## Veterans' Pension Benefits Targeted by Recent Scam

[In a recent news story](#) from the MilitaryTimes.com, it was reported that Veterans Affairs ("VA") officials have put out a warning about a recent rise in scams that target veterans' pension benefits.

"We are seeing a lot more instances – particularly seniors – are getting fraudulent calls," stated the Veterans Benefits Administration's chief financial officer Charles Tap II.

There are a variety of ways that scammers have targeted individuals to steal their

your investment options are still right for you

- Review the SMART Plan tools and distribution options available to help you achieve the retirement you want

Schedule an appointment with your Retirement Plan Advisor to make the most of your participation in the SMART Plan and remember there's never a cost for these critical conversations.



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## Baby Bonds Task Force

In our March [Retiree eNews Bulletin](#), we reported that Treasurer Goldberg announced the creation of a Baby Bonds Task Force. This Task Force will have its first meeting in June and is charged with providing the Treasurer, the Office of Economic Empowerment, and the Economic Empowerment Trust Fund with recommendations for creating a Baby Bond initiative in Massachusetts. This meeting will not be open to the public.

Baby Bonds are significant financial investments made by the government into a collective fund on behalf of newborn children. [Studies have shown](#) that Baby Bonds have helped shrink the racial wealth gap.

For more information, [please click here](#).

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## Real ID Enforcement Extended

information or money. One way is a scammer convincing an individual to change their bank account to one that the scammer has access to.

For more information on potential scams, be sure to visit the [Veterans Benefits Administration website](#).



This Memorial Day let us all reflect on those we have lost, and especially the students and educators along with Uvalde, TX and all communities across our country who have been touched by similar violence.

Past issues of our newsletter publications can be found on our [website](#).

**Quick links:** Visit our website:  
[www.mass.gov/retirement](http://www.mass.gov/retirement)

Like us on Facebook:  
[www.facebook.com/mass.state.retirement](https://www.facebook.com/mass.state.retirement)

Follow us on Twitter @MassStateRet:  
<https://twitter.com/massstateret>

Is there something you would like us to communicate in an upcoming **Retiree eNews Bulletin**? If so, let us know!

## to May 3, 2023

As a reminder, the Department of Homeland Security ("DHS") has extended the REAL ID enforcement from the previous date of October 1, 2021, to May 3, 2023.

Beginning on May 3, 2023, a standard license will NOT be acceptable to pass through domestic airport security checkpoints. You will need a REAL ID or another acceptable form of identification, such as a valid passport, federal government PIV card or US military ID.

For more information, you can visit the Massachusetts ID Requirements page on the Registry of Motor Vehicles' website: <https://www.mass.gov/guides/massachusetts-identification-id-requirements>.

Did you receive this **Retiree eNews Bulletin** as a forwarded email from a friend? If you are an MSERS retiree and would like to receive your own monthly **Retiree eNews Bulletin**, send your email address to us at [MSRBCommunications@tre.state.ma.us](mailto:MSRBCommunications@tre.state.ma.us).

Note: Please include your full name and either your MSRB I.D. or the last four digits of your Social Security Number, and request that we add it to our distribution list.

**Have you, or are you, planning to move?** If so, be sure to notify the Board of your address change! Retirees who already have summer and winter addresses on file with the Board can call us to request the address update. Otherwise, you'll need to notify the Board in writing. You can download our Change of Address form [here!](#)

## Contact us:

Please email your request or comments to  
[MSRBCommunications@tre.state.ma.us](mailto:MSRBCommunications@tre.state.ma.us).

We look forward to hearing from you!

**Boston Office:**

Downtown Crossing  
One Winter Street, 8th Floor  
Boston, MA 02108

**Springfield Office:**

436 Dwight Street, #109A  
Springfield, MA 01103

Tel: 617-367-7770

**Note: MSRB phones are answered  
Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.,  
except on state holidays.**