Do you know the role the political process plays in defining public pensions and ultimately your benefits?? The political process can be lengthy, confusing and is always challenging for those who seek access to influence the system.

The first segment in the political process is the seven-member ERB Board of Trustees. All ERB members are not allowed to vote for trustees, while members of New Mexico’s other public pension system (PERA) do vote for trustees. The ERB Board of Trustees is responsible for the employment of the ERB Executive director. The Board of Trustees is also the first step in voting to change your benefits. Two ERB Board members have been on the Board since 1999 and 2002. Is it time for a change??

The second segment of the political process is the legislature. In New Mexico, there are two legislative houses, the Senate and the House. Members are elected by voters. Unlike a number of New Mexico’s political offices, legislators have no term limits!

Your ERB benefits, in most cases, are changed by statute. The Senators and the House of Representatives sponsor proposed legislation (bills), which can include a change in your COLA or other regulations such as when you can retire. Ranking Senators and Representatives assign bills to committees that hold hearings on those bills. The entire Senate or House may hold floor debates and votes for a bill that has been passed out of committee. Most of the time, bills vary from the Senate to the House and may require a Conference Committee (composed of Senators and Representatives) to agree on the content of a proposed bill. Bills that pass both the Senate and the House go to the Governor.
The final segment of the political process is the Governor. If the Governor signs the bill, it becomes law. Generally, if the Governor does not sign the bill, the bill does not become law. This is a very cursory example of the complexity of changes that can affect your ERB benefits.

Every step of the political process affords opportunities for us to change outcomes that will affect the ERB benefits for both retirees and those still working. You need to actively engage your ERB Board of Trustees, Senator, Representative and candidates for those offices, as well as candidates for Governor.

**VOTE FOR THOSE WHO WILL SUPPORT YOU!!!** Those who will represent you need to hear from you. You worked hard for your retirement; and you retired based on the benefits you were promised. **IT IS UP TO ALL OF US, RETIREES AND THOSE STILL WORKING, TO PROTECT OUR BENEFITS!!!**

**WHAT CAN YOU DO??**

If you know someone who is not registered to vote – help them register. **The deadline to register to vote is October 9, 2018.** Contact the Bernalillo County Clerk’s Office via the web page at [www.bernco.gov/clerk/elections](http://www.bernco.gov/clerk/elections). Absentee voting begins on October 9. Early voting runs from October 20-November 2. **Polls are open on November 6 (General Election Day) from 7 AM-7 PM.**

Contact your Senator, Representative, and candidates for the Senate and the House in your district. Ask where they stand on ERB benefits for retirees. **VOTE FOR THOSE WHO SUPPORT YOU!!!**

Those who run for political office count on your vote…**MAKE THEM EARN IT!!!**