

# FOREPAC DACs Look For Your Recommendations

ARSEA/APEAL's Friends of Retirees and Employees Political Action Committee (FOREPAC) was formed to help elect candidates who understand and support the issues and concerns of state and local government retirees and employees in Alabama.

Also, ARSEA/APEAL has encouraged our members to run for office since the inception of FOREPAC. You are the ones who will be most likely to understand legislation and programs that will help preserve and protect retirement benefits. Who would be better suited to serve in this capacity than those who work or worked alongside you.

Your local FOREPAC District Advisory Chair (DAC) reports all recommendations of members to the FOREPAC Board which considers contributing to the campaigns of those running for office who have a direct impact on the employment and retirement benefits of those participating in the Employees Retirement System.

## There are some questions you should ask yourself before recommending a candidate, such as:

- Is the candidate a current or former officeholder who has voted in favor of COLAs, bonuses and other issues affecting retirees in the past?
- Is the candidate a public retiree, or does he or she have a spouse or family member who is a public retiree/employee?
- Do you know candidates personally and know them to be sensitive to the needs of state and local government retirees/employees?



If you are not currently contributing to FOREPAC and would like to add a contribution of \$2 a month or \$24 a year to your membership, call our office at 334-834-9116 or visit our website using the QR code to the left.



FOREPAC DACs are currently researching candidates to recommend for municipal elections which will be held this August and the 2026 state races. If you or someone you know is planning to run for office, please contact your area's District Advisory Chair or e-mail our office at [retire@arsea.org](mailto:retire@arsea.org).

ALABAMA RETIRED STATE EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION • ALABAMA PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' ADVOCACY LEAGUE



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# ARSEA/APEAL Advantage

SPRING 2025 | VOLUME 2 | ISSUE 2



## From the Director

It's time to celebrate! ARSEA/APEAL had a successful 2025 legislative session. I want to personally thank all of you, our valued members, who worked so hard to pass and implement our legislation to create a process to return to retiree benefit increases without adversely affecting the Retirement Systems of Alabama. House Bill 158, championed by Representatives Clouse and Reynolds and Senator Barfoot, is now law. We are incredibly grateful for these legislators and their dedication to getting this bill enacted, so please be sure to personally thank them as well!

Speaking of the legislature, election season is upon us. Most local elections will take place in August, with fundraising beginning for legislative and statewide races after Memorial Day. If you know of an ARSEA/APEAL member running for office, please let us know. Also let us know if there are candidates in any of the local or legislative elections who support our issues. The FOREPAC Board will be meeting soon to begin discussing this election cycle, and we value your input!

As I always say, our association does not exist without our members. Please continue to recruit your friends, family, and coworkers to join us so that we will be an even stronger voice for both retired state and local government employees, as well as active local government employees. ARSEA/APEAL is the only state association SOLELY focused on serving our retirees that have so kindly served our state for many years.

One way to recruit members will be through our regional meetings this fall. Instead of holding an annual convention this year, ARSEA/APEAL will be holding seven different regional meetings throughout the state during the month of September. Members will be invited to join us for any of the meetings, where we will hold informational sessions and invite local public officials to speak to our group. After the meeting ends, we will have a cocktail hour to invite non-members to join us to learn more about our mission and how we work to protect and improve retiree benefits. **Please plan to attend at least one of these meetings! This is the perfect time to invite your friend, neighbor, or former co-worker to learn about ARSEA/APEAL.**

Thank you all for your support and dedication to ARSEA/APEAL!

*Kendsey Ward*



BENEFITS STILL FIT?

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## District Advisory Chairs

**District 1**  
(Jefferson)  
Eldridge Grant  
205-821-0464

**District 2**  
(Mobile, Washington)  
Kyle Callaghan  
251-421-1647

**District 3**  
(Montgomery)  
Lloyd Faulkner  
334-201-7137

**District 4**  
(Autauga, Elmore)  
Harold Hammond  
334-462-3212

**District 5**  
(Baldwin)  
Barbara Wheeler  
251-377-5238

**District 6**  
(Clarke, Conecuh, Escambia, Monroe)  
Lawrence Weaver  
251-363-3159

**District 7**  
(Butler, Coffee, Covington, Crenshaw, Pike)  
Buck Lee  
334-488-0211

**District 8**  
(Barbour, Bullock, Dale, Geneva, Henry, Houston)  
Bubba Blue  
334-850-4137

**District 9**  
(Choctaw, Greene, Hale, Marengo, Sumter)  
Thomas Moore  
334-216-7555

**District 10**  
(Dallas, Lowndes, Perry, Wilcox)  
Susan Youngblood  
334-419-0796

**District 11**  
(Chambers, Lee, Macon, Russell, Tallapoosa)  
Joe Lovvorn  
334-444-5631

**District 12**  
(Pickens, Tuscaloosa)  
Jane Griffin  
205-532-2069

**District 13**  
(Bibb, Chilton, Shelby, St. Clair)  
Winkler Sims  
205-290-5936

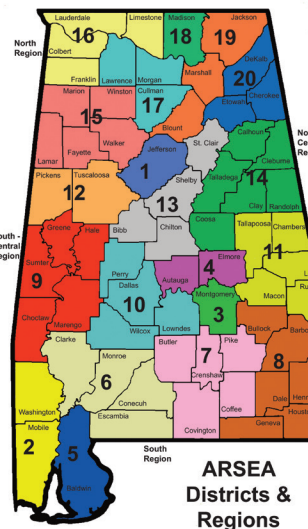
**District 14**  
(Calhoun, Clay, Cleburne, Coosa, Randolph, Talladega)  
Jerry Fielding  
256-208-5936

**District 15**  
(Fayette, Lamar, Marion, Walker, Winston)  
Jeff Sparks  
205-300-3701

**District 16**  
(Colbert, Franklin, Lauderdale, Limestone)  
Stan Skipworth  
256-710-1582

**District 17**  
(Cullman, Lawrence, Morgan)  
Peggy Harris  
256-531-2525

**District 18**  
(Madison)  
Geoff Statum  
256-783-4112



ARSEA Districts & Regions

Share this issue with a friend and encourage them to become a member. Follow the QR code to join.



PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR BALLOT BEFORE JUNE 16, 2025

## 2025 ARSEA/APEAL Board of Directors ELECTION

### Board Officer Candidates *All members vote in this category.*



**PRESIDENT-ELECT**  
**Mike Sparks**

Michael "Mike" Sparks retired as Director of the Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences in 2018 with 39 years of service. In 2017, seeing the needs in his community and the state, he ran for Senate District 13. In the process, he attended many of our meetings and met hundreds of ARSEA/APEAL members.

Having joined our association, he asked to be more involved and has since served on the ARSEA/APEAL Board of Directors representing District 14. He currently serves as Vice President North Central.

He and his wife Sheila live in Lineville. He is currently Chairman of the Clay Co Republican Executive Committee and a member of Barfield Baptist Church where he serves as a Deacon.



**VICE PRESIDENT**  
**NORTH-CENTRAL**  
**Winkler Sims**

Winkler Sims retired in 2014 from the Alabama Department of Public Health as the Immunization Division Director with 33 years of service. He is the FOREPAC District Advisory Chair for District 13 and was re-elected to a second term as the District 13 Representative on the ARSEA/APEAL Board in 2023.

Winkler served 6 years as the treasurer of the Alabama Public Health Association and served a term as president of the Alabama Public Health Association.

He graduated from Auburn University in 1980 with a Bachelor of Science. Winkler and his wife, Dianne who also retired from ADPH, reside in Hoover and work together on local meetings and recruiting efforts.



**VICE PRESIDENT**  
**SOUTH**  
**Rebekah Cornelison**

Rebekah Cornelison retired from the Alabama Department of Labor as an Employment Service Representative in 2017. A former elementary school teacher, she was educated at Auburn University and Patrick Henry Junior College.

She was appointed to fill an unexpired term as the District 6 Board Representative and was elected to two full terms on the Board of Directors. She has been a supporter of FOREPAC and the ARSEA Foundation.

Rebekah was elected in 2018 as Chairman for the Monroe County Republican Party where she is in contact with members of the legislature and works to improve conditions for citizens in her district.

She and her husband Steve live in Uriah and are actively involved with family, church, and mission ministries.

### District Representatives



**DISTRICT 1**  
**JEFFERSON COUNTY**  
**Ralls Coston**

Ralls Coston retired as an environmental health program supervisor in 2012 from the Jefferson County Department of Health with 32 years of service. Since retirement, Ralls has been involved with missions and volunteer work at the Presbytery of Shepards, Lapsley, and Oakmont Presbyterian Church where he has chaired committees for Mission Outreach, the Adult Education Committee, led Sunday School classes, and coordinated volunteers for Habitat for Humanity, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, and served as a Hunger Action Advocate among others.

Ralls has a degree from the University of Montevallo and certifications from UAB. He served as president of AEHS in 1999-2000 and is involved in the Jefferson County Health Department Chapter.



**DISTRICT 2**  
**MOBILE AND WASHINGTON COUNTIES**  
**Kyle Callaghan**

Kyle Callaghan retired from the Board of Pardons and Paroles in 2015 as a parole officer. Since retirement, he has been employed as an insurance adjuster and worked with the Board of Registrars in Mobile County. His experience in law enforcement has come from several years of service including Spring Hill College Police Department, U.S. Coast Guard Investigative Service, and military service. He also worked for the Mobile County Sheriff's Office as a Co-Commander and Deputy Sheriff (1988-2006).

He is a graduate of Spring Hill College and holds a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from Faulkner University. He has chaired and served on several committees and has served as a youth athletic coach among other community activities.

He and his wife Kim reside in Mobile.



**DISTRICT 6**  
**CLARKE, CONECUH, ESCAMBIA AND MONROE COUNTIES**  
**Lawrence Weaver**

Lawrence Weaver became the Brewton fire chief in 1998 and retired in 2014 with 40 years of service with the Brewton Fire Department. He was an adjunct fire instructor for the Alabama Fire College in Tuscaloosa. He also had a chimney cleaning business and worked as the Community Service Coordinator for Escambia County. After retirement, Weaver ran and served four years on the Brewton City Council. He is currently the Escambia County 911 Board Chair.

Weaver became involved with ARSEA/APEAL in Escambia County as a chapter leader and is currently the FOREPAC District 6 Advisory Chair (DAC). Weaver recruited 12 new ARSEA/APEAL members in 2024 and won the distinction of being last year's best recruiter.

### District Representatives, continued



**DISTRICT 8**  
**BARBER, BULLOCK, DALE, GENEVA, HENRY AND HOUSTON COUNTIES**  
**Bubba Blue\***

Bubba Blue retired from the Alabama Department of Public Safety in 1994 following 26 years of service. He worked on the executive security detail of the Alabama State Senate for four years. He was Eufaula Post's "Trooper of the Year." Blue served on the Board of Directors of the Alabama State Troopers' Association for eight years was elected vice-president.

Currently employed as the part-time E-911 coordinator for Bullock County, Blue has been a member of ARSEA for 20 years.

He and his wife, Kathy Barfoot Blue, reside in Union Springs.



**DISTRICT 10**  
**DALLAS, LOWNDES, PERRY AND WILCOX COUNTIES**  
**Susan Youngblood\***

Susan Youngblood of Selma retired from the District Attorney's Office in 2005. She served on the Selma City Council for 12 years representing Ward 2, deciding not to run for re-election in 2020 with plans to help with revitalization efforts in the city.

She became the Program Director for the Selma Redevelopment Authority in November of 2020. She was the Program Coordinator for the District Attorney's Office 4th Judicial Circuit from 1990 to 2006.

Youngblood earned a degree from Southeastern Paralegal College in 1985 and earned several leadership certifications through the years from Auburn University. She served two years as co-adviser for the state of Alabama Delta Regional Authority Network and served on several committees for the Delta Regional Authority Leadership Program.



**DISTRICT 12**  
**PICKENS AND TUSCALOOSA COUNTIES**  
**Camillia Ratliff-Eatman\***

Camilla Ratliff-Eatman retired as the Area Agency on Aging Director for the Alabama Tombigbee Regional Commission in 2012 where she created programs benefiting senior citizens and providing adult education opportunities.

She graduated from U.S. Jones High School, earned an Associate of Liberal Arts from Concordia College, and a BA in Business Administration from Stillman College. She is on the board of directors at Friends of Theo Ratliff Activity Center in Demopolis, past president of Mothers of Professional Basketball Players organization, and Executive Director of the Theo Ratliff Scholarship Fund. She is a member of the Stillman College Women's Organization, a member of Elizabeth Baptist Church and the Whitestone Chapter of the Eastern Stars.

She is married to Dennis Eatman and is the mother of three and a grandmother to nine.



**DISTRICT 20**  
**CHEROKEE, DEKALB AND ETOWAH COUNTIES**  
**Johnny Grant\***

Johnny M. Grant retired from the Etowah County Commission in 2013. He began his service in 1975 with the Altoona Police Department and later became an Etowah County Deputy Sheriff. After retirement, he was elected to the Etowah County Commission and currently represents District 20.

He was presented the Medal of Valor and was commended by the Alabama House and Senate for his actions following the 2011 tornados. In November of 2021, he was inducted into the Patriot's Hall of Honor and was recognized on Patriots Day in Etowah County.

He has served as the president of the Etowah County ARSEA/APEAL Chapter and has served one term on the ARSEA/APEAL Board representing District 20.

**\*Has agreed to run for a second term**

A space is provided for write-in candidates.

<b>Board Officers</b>		
PRESIDENT-ELECT	VICE PRESIDENT NORTH-CENTRAL	VICE PRESIDENT SOUTH
<input type="checkbox"/> Mike Sparks	<input type="checkbox"/> Winkler Sims	<input type="checkbox"/> Rebekah Cornelison
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Please only vote for one candidate in your district (see bios for list of counties in each district). A space is provided for write-in candidates.		
<b>District Representatives</b>		
DISTRICT 1	DISTRICT 2	DISTRICT 6
<input type="checkbox"/> Ralls Coston	<input type="checkbox"/> Kyle Callaghan	<input type="checkbox"/> Lawrence Weaver
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
DISTRICT 8	DISTRICT 10	DISTRICT 12
<input type="checkbox"/> Bubba Blue	<input type="checkbox"/> Susan Youngblood	<input type="checkbox"/> Camilla Ratliff-Eatman
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
DISTRICT 20	<b>Member Name</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Johnny Grant	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	

Please submit your ballot before June 16, 2025 electronically by signing above and e-mailing a photograph of your ballot to retire@arsea.org or text 334-590-5186. You may also mail your ballot to: ARSEA Elections, 450 S Union Street, Montgomery, AL 36104.

### Re-Elect Mike Gillespie Local Representative to the RSA Board of Control

#### Information and qualifications

- First person elected statewide to this position
- Unanimously nominated by the ARSEA/APEAL Board
- Chair of the Administration Committee for the Retirement Systems of Alabama Board
- Chair of the Local Government Health Insurance Board
- Served 8 terms (32 years) as Chair of the Madison County Commission
- Member of National Public Finance Authority Board
- Received state, local, and international awards for economic development and has been involved with economic development for over 40 years
- Founded the North Alabama International Trade Association
- Chair of the Crestwood Medical Center Board

RSA will distribute ballots to local government employees and retirees on June 3rd. Ballots must be returned by July 15th.



**"Having won the statewide election four years ago, I will continue to use my knowledge and experience as a guide in making decisions that serve the best interests of ERS members. I have worked closely and cooperatively with Dr. Bronner and the RSA staff to protect our retirement benefits. I am prepared to make the necessary decisions to keep our retirement system strong. I have been honored to serve as your Local Government Representative, and I ask for your vote."**

- Mike Gillespie

## SAVE THE DATE FOR REGIONAL MEETINGS

Join us in September as we celebrate the successful passage of the **COLA Legislation** at our Regional Meetings.

This year, we will hold 7 Regional Meetings rather than a convention. Members can join us for an affordable event and WIN PRIZES, learn about benefits, meet candidates, and have fun.

Details coming soon!

<b>GUNTERSVILLE</b>	<b>SEPT 10</b>
<b>FLORENCE</b>	<b>SEPT 11</b>
<b>MOBILE</b>	<b>SEPT 17</b>
<b>DOTHAN</b>	<b>SEPT 18</b>
<b>MONTGOMERY</b>	<b>SEPT 23</b>
<b>MONTEVALLO</b>	<b>SEPT 25</b>
<b>TUSCALOOSA</b>	<b>SEPT 26</b>

Have fun!  
Learn about benefits!  
Meet candidates!  
**WIN PRIZES!**