

TEXAS PUBLIC EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

512 EAST ELEVENTH STREET
SUITE 100
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701

July 24, 2020

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Governor of Texas
State Capitol
PO Box 12428
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Governor Abbott:

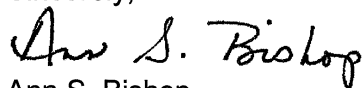
The Texas Public Employees Association represents more than eleven thousand active state employees and retirees from all corners of the state. We are grateful for your strong and compassionate leadership during the current public health crisis.

As you are no doubt aware, many state employees have worked tirelessly during the crisis to provide the vitally important services that Texans rely on in their everyday lives. From emergency management, public health, state supported living centers, prisons and law enforcement to occupational licensing, processing unemployment claims, and ensuring workplace safety, state employees have answered the call to serve our citizens and keep Texas moving forward.

In performing their public duties during this emergency, many state employees have been unable to take annual (vacation) leave that they have earned and to which they are entitled. Under existing law, state employees may carry unused vacation leave forward from one year to the next. The number of allowable carryover hours depends on the length of state service. See §661.152(g), Gov't Code.

Because of the uncertainty of the course of the current crisis for the remainder of the fiscal year, and extending into next year, it is likely that many state employees will not be able to take all or part of their accrued leave by the end of the fiscal year. If this occurs, they will lose this important benefit of state employment. We ask you to use your executive authority to suspend the current limitations on carrying over accrued hours from year to year to allow hard-working state employees who are standing to their posts to take their well-earned leave time when conditions allow but not to exceed six months. Leave hours more than the current statutory amounts would not be counted as annual leave for retirement purposes. Such an order would recognize the sacrifice that so many state employees are now making to assure that, when Texas gets fully back on its feet, we will be well positioned to resume the amazing economic dynamism that we have come to expect.

Sincerely,



Ann S. Bishop
Executive Director