

2025 Friends of CalRTA Award Winners

The State Government Relations Committee, with the approval of the CalRTA Board of Directors, honors the following individuals as this year's Friends of CalRTA:



Representative Linda Sanchez

Congresswoman Linda Sánchez is being honored because of her steadfast advocacy on behalf of retired educators, particularly through her work on the House Ways and Means Committee and its Subcommittee on Social

Security. At a pivotal hearing on H.R. 82, Rep. Sánchez gave powerful testimony defending the rights of working women—many of whom are CalRTA members—who have been unfairly penalized by the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO). Her leadership in championing fairness and equity in Social Security reform reflects the values and mission of CalRTA.



Speaker of the Assembly Robert Rivas

Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas is being recognized for his consistent support of public education, retired educators, and the CalSTRS pension system. The son of farmworkers and a product of California's

public schools, Speaker Rivas embodies the values of equity and opportunity. As Chair of the Assembly Public Employment and Retirement Committee (PERS), he was a vocal advocate for the retirement security of educators and a strong supporter of legislation aligned with CalRTA's mission.

In 2019, he established the Golden State Teacher Grant Program, securing \$89 million to provide \$20,000 scholarships to college students who commit to teaching in high-need areas such as special education, bilingual education, and STEM. As Assembly Speaker, Rivas continues to engage with CalRTA members and listen to their concerns, reaffirming his commitment to ensuring that every child in California has access to a quality education. His leadership and responsiveness make him a true ally of retired educators.



State Senator John Laird

Senator John Laird is being honored for his longstanding commitment to public education and retired educators. As Chair of Senate Budget Subcommittee #1 on Education and a member of the Senate Labor, Public Employment, and Retirement Committee, Senator Laird plays a key role

in shaping legislation that directly impacts CalRTA members. He has consistently spoken in support of the bills CalRTA endorses, demonstrating his alignment with our mission.

The son of teachers and a graduate of UC Santa Cruz, Senator Laird began his public service on the Cabrillo College Board of Trustees and has remained a steadfast advocate for California's students and educators ever since. He has authored legislation to expand both educational opportunities and access to health care, further underscoring his dedication to the wellbeing of those who serve in our schools. His voice and leadership in the Capitol make him a true champion of retired teachers.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION



Former Representative Garret Graves



Former Representative Abigail Spanberger

Former Representatives Garret Graves and Abigail Spanberger are being honored with special recognition for their unwavering dedication to ending the unjust Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO). As co-authors of H.R. 82, their leadership was instrumental in advancing the bill that ultimately led to the successful passage of the Social Security Fairness Act. Both Representatives worked directly with CalRTA President Emerita Susan Dixon, championing the cause of fairness for retired educators and other public workers unfairly impacted by the WEP and GPO. Their tireless efforts have made a lasting impact on the lives of millions of Americans.



California Retired Teachers Association

1900 Point West Way, Suite 212 | Sacramento, CA 95815 | 800-523-2782 | www.calrta.org