



Connections

Staying connected with Michigan's retirees

March 2023

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State retirement tax repealed

Earlier this month, lawmakers approved changes to the 4.25% state tax on pension and retirement income.

Public Act (PA) 4 of 2023 modifies the **Income Tax Act of 1967** to allow retired sergeants and troopers who receive a pension from the State Police Retirement System to be exempt from state income tax beginning with the 2023 tax year. For most other pension recipients, the changes are gradually rolled back over four years based on one's age.

A retiree with an average pension of \$1,983 will see an increase of about \$84 per month by 2026 when the new tax rules have fully taken effect. About 60% of those savings will go to taxpayers with a federal adjusted gross income of between \$50,000 and \$150,000, according to the Michigan Department of Treasury.

"It will ensure seniors can keep more of what they've earned over a lifetime of hard work," Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said in a statement.

The law, which Whitmer signed March 7, takes effect 90 days after the Michigan Legislature's current session ends in December. It was part of a **Lowering MI Costs** tax plan, which also quintuples the **Michigan Earned Income Tax Credit for Working Families**.

The Michigan Office of Retirement Services (ORS) and the Michigan Department of Treasury are working to assess the repeal's impact, and to determine what changes are necessary with minimal impact to retirees.

The new law also includes withdrawals from individual retirement accounts



Gov. Gretchen Whitmer signed PA 4 of 2023 on March 7.

and the portion of a 401(k) account that is subject to an employer match.

Retirees who want to use the PA 4 of 2023 limits may want to file their 2023 tax returns after the law's effective date. If filing before the law goes into effect, an amended return can be filed. For joint returns, the older spouse's birth year can be used.

Find more information at:

Public Act 4 of 2023
Frequently asked questions





“ORS is driven to empower you for a successful today and a secure tomorrow.”

From the director

Welcome to your March 2023 issue of the *Connections* newsletter.

With Public Act 4 of 2023, retirees may select current deductible limits on pensions or retirement income or can choose new limitations beginning with 2023 state income taxes filed in 2024.

The measure rolls back Michigan’s tax on pension income in effect since Jan. 1, 2012. The repeal was signed into law by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer on March 7.

The Michigan Office of Retirement Services (ORS) is assessing the updates needed to accommodate the new law, working closely with the Michigan Department of Treasury to make those. Our goal is to implement the law with minimal impact to you.

This is the latest example of how ORS works diligently on behalf of our members and retirees.

In the December 2022 issue of *Connections*, we shared ORS made changes for redesigned IRS *Form W-4P* for federal tax withholdings on periodic pension and annuity payments. Updates were made in miAccount and on required ORS forms and letters to meet the Jan. 1, 2023, IRS deadline.

We also completed work related to Public Act 184 of 2022, which simplified working after retirement rules for Michigan Public School Employees’ Retirement System retirees.

As an innovative retirement organization, ORS is driven to empower you — our customers — for a successful today and a secure tomorrow.

Anthony Estell, director

Michigan Office of Retirement Services

ORS serves about 600,000 people



452,341
public school
employees



121,293
state
employees



16,816
Michigan National
Guard members



6,561
state police
officers



1,413
judicial
employees



469
Legislature
employees

who are active, deferred, and retired from 697 Michigan employers

A cautionary note about financial presentations

Now that you're retired, you may be solicited by an influx of organizations, financial services firms, and independent financial planners that want to guide you with issues specific to retirement.

Many of these of meetings may be productive and helpful. Some, however, are only designed to qualify you as a lead toward selling you an investment opportunity that's not necessarily in your best interest.

Financial services seminars are readily available and mostly free to attend; some firms may even buy you dinner. It's important to remember these are not affiliated with the Michigan Office of Retirement Services (ORS) in any way.

The best way to get accurate information about your pension plan is through direct contact with ORS. You may contact our representatives by logging in to **miAccount**, which is available through MiLogin, and using the Message Board for more personalized information.



We advise you to be wary of unsolicited sales pitches and to do your homework. If there is, in their communication with you, any expressed or implied connection with ORS, you can know that's not true. Proceed with caution.

Retirement is a journey, and ORS is always here to assist you with yours.

Cybersecurity awareness

Part 1: Generations

Technology changes every day. The generation you were born in can indicate how you relate to technology.

Digital immigrants are people not born in the digital age who had to learn over time about technology as it was introduced and adopted. These are silent traditionalists, baby boomers, and Generation X, typically born between 1925 and 1980. These generations most likely felt comfortable with flip phones and VCRs.

Digital natives are people born between 1980 and present day. This group includes millennials, Generation Z, and Generation Alpha. These individuals never knew a time without digital technology because they were born into it.

Cybersecurity awareness three-part series

This month: Generational differences.

June 2023: Understanding terminology.

September 2023: Keeping information safe.

These generations prefer texting instead of calling and have less knowledge than their predecessors on how rotary telephones work.

As technology advances, so does the risk to our digital and financial security, according to **a 2022 report** by Deloitte and the World Economic Forum.

Enjoy yourself in retirement

Your years of working hard, planning, scrimping, and saving have gotten you here.

In retirement, it's now time to make the most of what you have and make it last. Savor these moments and stretch your savings.

April is Financial Literacy Month.

It's a good time to review your goals, those you set for yourself. This is an opportunity to review your financial plans and refocus your goals, if necessary.

The most fundamental steps toward financial wellness and peace of mind are:

- Establish a budget, a **spending and savings plan**, that's realistic.
- Manage cash flow and debt.
- Automate some of your savings.
- Get **professional financial advice** for guidance and support.
- Plan, be patient, and adjust to keep desires in focus and goals on track.

Live within your means:

- Cut down on mindless or unnecessary expenses.
- Practice contentment in your life.
- Stay out of debt by using credit and credit cards wisely and more sparingly.
- **Pay down debt** whenever possible.



Other tips for your financial well-being from Voya Financial:

- Manage your finances by reviewing your pension, savings, investments, and retirement income options and strategies.
- Consider your healthcare needs, maintain a healthy lifestyle, and prepare for future costs and coverage.
- Protect your family and finances by looking at your life, long-term and critical care insurance; plan out your estate; and consider caregiving needs.
- Stay on top of things by being organized and protecting your identity.

Michigan State University Extension **MI Money Health** offers money management education, information, and more. **America Saves** is a nonprofit that encourages and supports households to save money, reduce debt, and build wealth. Voya Financial services the **State of Michigan 401(k) and 457 Plans** through the Michigan Office of Retirement Services.



Retiree spotlight

'I can't stop doing things'

To protect and to serve is a lifelong calling for Matt Wesaw.

"I'm just a couple months short of 70 years old," said Wesaw, who's filled several roles since retiring as a state trooper in January 2001. "I can't stop doing things."

The Holt resident spent 26 years with the **Michigan State Police** (MSP) enlisted ranks, retiring as detective sergeant and serving at posts in Jackson, Flat Rock, Lansing, and East Lansing.

Raised in a Native American family of seven in Bangor, he was instilled with "this idea of service."

Wesaw has done three stints as tribal chairman, two in retirement, for the Dowagiac-based **Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians**.

"During that time, we were able to build our own sovereign government," Wesaw said. "There was a lot of pride putting that together."



Gloria and Matt Wesaw have been married 41 years and raised four children.



Matt Wesaw at a Michigan Civil Rights Commission meeting.

He has chaired the Michigan Commission on Indian Affairs, served on the **Michigan Civil Rights Commission**, and was **Michigan Department of Civil Rights** (MDCR) executive director for two years (2013-2015). At MDCR, he spearheaded certified sign language interpreter rules reform and Advocates and Leaders for Police and Community Trust program expansion.

When he retired as detective sergeant, Wesaw was vice president of the **Michigan State Police Troopers Association** (MSPTA). He became director of government relations, which he did for eight years.

Wesaw is currently chairperson for the MSPTA Associate Retiree Committee, which has 36 monthly gatherings across the state.

Wesaw and his wife, Gloria, married 41 years, have four children and 11 grandchildren in Lansing, Wisconsin, and Kentucky. She is an office manager/legal assistant for an East Lansing law firm.

His other current pursuits include golf, British Virgin Islands bareboat trips with friends, and Native American affairs consulting. He's thankful for his State Police Retirement System pension.

"Once all the kids graduated from college, it put us in a position to do whatever," Wesaw said of his state police pension.

Do you have a story to share? Send it to ORS-RetireeStories@Michigan.gov.

Ask our experts

Michigan Office of Retirement Services (ORS) experts answer frequently asked questions.

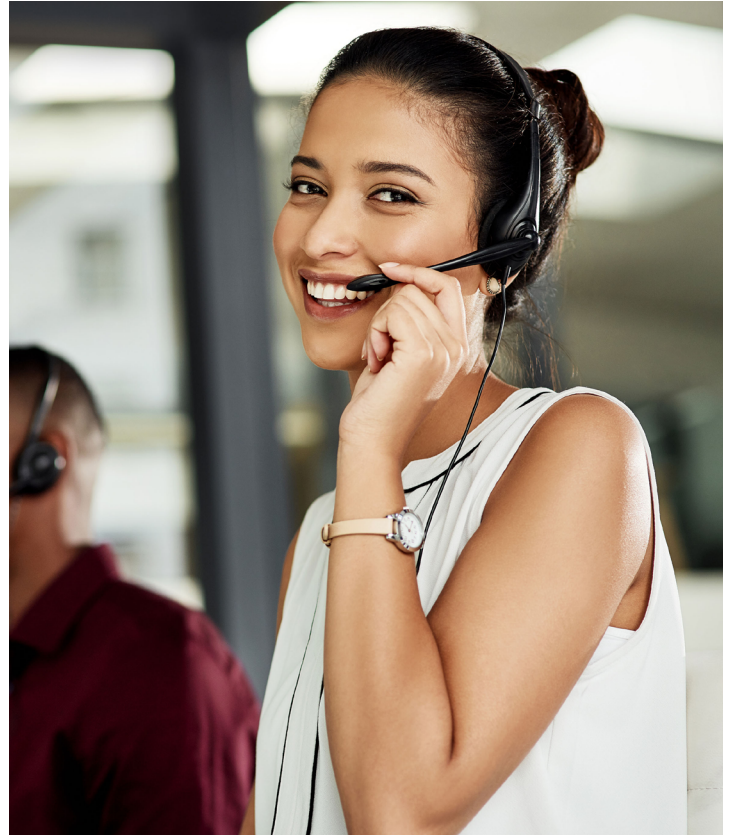
When I try to access miAccount, I am redirected to the MILogin sign-on page.

What is this and how do I get to miAccount?

MILogin is the single sign-on application you use to access online many state services and systems, including miAccount.

If you don't yet have a MILogin account, you need to create one from the [MILogin](#) page. You then add access to any state services you want to use (miAccount, Secretary of State, etc.).

See our [MILogin Help Instructions](#) for details.



Update ORS

It is critical that you report any of the following changes in personal information to ORS: address, email, tax withholding, direct deposit, death, divorce, marriage, and Medicare information.

The fastest, easiest way to report these and other life events is through **miAccount**.

You can also contact us at:



Michigan.gov/ORS
Facebook.com/MichiganORS
Twitter.com/MichiganORS



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Pension pay dates

Pension payments are issued on the 25th of the month. If the 25th falls on a weekend or holiday, your pension will be paid the previous business day. In December, it's a week earlier.

If your payment is not credited within three days after the scheduled payment date, check with your bank first, and then contact ORS.

Office closures

May 29	Memorial Day
June 19	Juneteenth
July 4	Independence Day
Sept. 4	Labor Day
Nov. 10	Veterans Day