



**RPEC 2024-2025 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**  
As approved by the RPEC Convention: 9/25/2024



**TOP TIER PRIORITIES**

**Federal**

- Work to protect and expand Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, and prevent privatization.
- Work to improve Medicare benefits, lower costs, and maintain and expand access to Vision, Dental, Hearing and other coverage gaps.
- Advocate for equal benefits between Medicare and Medicare Advantage plans.
- Work to pass legislation that eliminates the contribution cap to Social Security (\$168,600 in 2024) and adopts the CPI-E (consumer price index-elderly) to calculate the cost-of-living adjustments.

**State**

- Work to restore a permanent Plan 1 COLA. Adjust employer contribution rates to accommodate a permanent Plan 1 COLA like those available for Plans 2 and 3. Include the permanent Plan 1 COLA in the projected 2025/2027 biennium contribution rates.
- Be aggressive in maintaining and improving the financial integrity of the State retirement system:
  - Support full funding of employer contribution rates to pension plans.
  - Oppose efforts to create any new retirement plans for public employees that diminish benefit levels and/or compromise retirement security
  - Support only those modifications to retirement plans that do not threaten the financial integrity of the retirement system
- Continue efforts to strengthen the role of active and retired DRS members in DRS governance.
- Work to ensure all public sector retirees statewide have access to quality, affordable healthcare and the information necessary to choose the best plans for their particular needs.
- Ensure comprehensive, affordable Public Employees' Benefits Board (PEBB) self-insured Medicare benefits by increasing the state's contribution to premiums.
- Support legislation that would propose an amendment to the Constitution of the State of Washington – through the mechanism of the State Legislature to ensure the integrity of public pensions as enforceable contracts.

## **FEDERAL PRIORITIES**

### **Social Security and Medicare**

- Advocate for fair premiums for Medicare coverage.
- Support a Federal Government sponsored Universal Health Care Program.
- Support the full implementation of the Older Americans Act.
- Pursue affordable long-term care options for retirees.
- Work with the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services to lessen claim denials with commercial Medicare Advantage (MA) plans and eliminate fraud.
- Fight for the elimination of the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO) which unfairly diminishes the Social Security benefit of some public employees.
- Oppose any deferment, reduction or elimination of the payroll taxes that fund Social Security and Medicare.
- Support legislation to revise the federal tax code to reflect progressive taxation, relieving the current tax burden on low- and middle-income persons and creating a fair-share tax for corporations.

## **STATE PRIORITIES**

### **Retirement**

- Work to expand access to the Minimum Retirement Benefit for Plan 1 PERS & TRS retirees who are over the age of 65 through a change to current legislation.
- Advocate for retirement security, particularly defined benefit-style pensions for all Washingtonians.
- Advocate for legislation that improves access to affordable housing.
- Advocate for correcting the regressive nature of Washington's tax code.

### **Health Care**

- Support and monitor the Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) in its regulation of Medicare supplement policies and rates to ensure quality, affordable plans. Advocate for the OIC to have a non-voting seat on PEBB.
- Support and monitor the Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) and Health Care Authority (HCA) to ensure quality, affordable plans, and to maintain availability of at least one self-insured retiree plan. Work to increase the state's contribution to PEBB plans.
- Work to ensure an RPEC member continues to serve as a voting member on PEBB or any future board that replaces it.

### **Contracting Out/Privatization**

- Oppose efforts to privatize or contract out public services.

## **RPEC ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION**

- Continue to encourage RPEC member-volunteers to advance RPEC's legislative agenda, to support lobbying activities year around, and to create relationships with their legislators.
- Continue to expand coalitions with other groups and seek stakeholder input in all areas of RPEC policy development.