



## **Retired Public Employees Council Chapter 18 – Grays Harbor/ Pacific Counties**

**Ruth Cook, Vice-President**

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**Meeting October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025 @ 11:00 AM**

**\*Join from home by Zoom or in-person\***

### **In-Person Meeting Location**

**Ocean Palace Restaurant  
112 E Wishkah St  
Aberdeen, WA 98520**

### **Computer Login Information**

**Go to <https://zoom.us/join>  
Meeting ID: 836 0967 8671  
Passcode: 089488  
Business Meeting at Noon**

### **Phone Login Information**

**Dial: (253) 215- 8782  
Meeting ID: 836 0967 671  
Passcode: 089488  
Business Meeting at Noon**

### **Program**

Our guest speaker for October is scheduled to be Adam Bernbaum, State Representative for the 24th District. Adam Bernbaum represents the Olympic Peninsula with a deep understanding of the challenges faced by its residents. Growing up in a union household, Adam witnessed the importance of stable jobs, reliable healthcare, and community support. His experiences fueled his commitment to ensuring every family has the resources and opportunities needed to thrive. Adam joined the House of Representatives in 2024 after building a career dedicated to service and advocacy.

As state representative, Adam focuses on practical solutions to strengthen the region's future. He is committed to expanding affordable housing, fostering economic development, improving rural healthcare, and protecting our environment. Adam believes in creating opportunities where young people can achieve their dreams, and older generations can retire with dignity. Adam lives in Port Angeles, where he continues to listen, learn, and fight for the needs of his neighbors and constituents.

### **HIGHLIGHTS OF LAST MEETING**

Our guest was Kay Tomlinson of AARP who spoke to us about fraud and identity theft. She explained that financial exploitation is different than fraud. Financial exploitation involves falsifying records and denying access, while fraud is stranger danger and imposter identity theft. Imposter scams are unexpected communications usually via phone, text, or e-mail. There is usually a sense of urgency. She suggested that we do research and contact the organization and not use any phone numbers provided by the scammers. She also cautioned us not to invest in crypto, which is the fastest growing scam. She gave us an assignment: Search "crypto ATMs near me." They are all around us and risky. New member, Vickie B., was introduced and welcomed. The Treasurer gave his report, and the minutes of last month's meeting were read and approved as amended. Ruth will set up meetings of both the Legislative Committee and the Membership Committee to develop plans for the coming year.

## **Good of the Chapter**

Our chapter has been active in supporting the organization's efforts to protect our retirement security. As we head towards the next legislative session, we will need all members to be ready to respond to requests from the Council office. If you have decided that it is time to get involved, please either join us for our business meeting or let me know that you are interested in helping. We will find the place where your skills and talents can be best utilized.

## **Did You Know**

An article in AARP magazine explores how aging impacts cellular energy and offers practical strategies to combat age-related fatigue. It highlights the role of mitochondria in energy production and explains that lifestyle changes—such as regular physical activity, quality sleep, intermittent fasting, and maintaining social connections—can help restore and sustain vitality. The piece also includes quick tips to reduce fatigue. These tips are effective, immediate boosters for alertness and well-being.

The five tips are:

1. Drink a glass of water. Even mild dehydration causes fatigue and tanks alertness. And older adults are more susceptible to the condition.
2. Step outside for a break. Connecting with nature can be restorative—and a good antidote to mental burnout and workday stress.
3. Walk for a few. For every 30 minutes of sitting, take a light, three-minute walk. This pattern is known to help fight fatigue.
4. Try cold water. Turn on the shower for a cool blast; people report feeling more active, alert, attentive and inspired after a bracing immersion.
5. Give a sniff. Inhaling a scent like peppermint or citrus has been shown to boost alertness, likely because odors have a strong effect on one's emotions.

Please join us, either on Zoom or the Ocean Palace Restaurant in Aberdeen on October 14th.

Best Regards,  
Ruth Cook  
Chapter 18 President

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## **OCTOBER 2025 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

Are you ready to get to work helping us to protect your retirement security? Our union is fueled by each of you – your talents, strengths and commitment to service. We ask each of you to join with the members of your chapter to meet with state and federal legislators. RPEC's mission is to protect your retirement benefits. We can only do that by being visible with elected officials who are entrusted with legislative authority. We are specifically looking for members who are willing to work with us this fall and in the new legislative session to offer testimony. To that end, we will be hosting a Zoom educational program for all those who would like to gain experience in developing written and verbal testimony. We are looking for

members who have not done this before or those who have not been involved in providing testimony for some time. Legislators need to meet as many new RPEC members as possible from their legislative and congressional districts. Everyone is welcome. See details below.

One of the many things I love about RPEC is the spirit of our members. RPEC members are expectant – ready and willing to engage in a worthy fight. Protecting your retirement benefits is worthy of your time and talents. Please join us. If you have very little time to give, we'll find a place for you to contribute. If you would like to learn more about how to get more involved in our legislative work, please reach out to me and Associate Director Derek VanSpoor at the Council Office or via email at [info@rpecwa.org](mailto:info@rpecwa.org).

### **Strategic Plan Update – Strategic Plan Special Task Force Delivers Report, Oct. 17**

Two years ago, the Executive Board appointed about a dozen members-at-large from across the state to serve on the Strategic Plan Special Task Force. The Task Force was formed to evaluate the governance structures of RPEC with the goal of making recommendations to the Board to strengthen the organization. The Task Force met in 2024 to develop checklists that could be used for the evaluations. The checklists emerged from months of meetings and research. The checklists detail the “gold standard” attributes that are evident in high-functioning membership-driven organizations/unions. The checklists were then reviewed and approved by the Executive Board in November 2024. At that Board meeting, additional Task Force members were appointed (to replace those who for various reasons were unable to continue service) to serve in 2025.

In January, the Task Force formed into smaller groups to begin the evaluation process using the approved checklists. The small groups have been meeting 2-3 times per month to evaluate the effectiveness of RPEC's governance structures (overall statewide governance, chapter governance and fiscal governance).

The Task Force will share its final report with recommendations to the Executive Board at an Executive Board Work Session on Friday, October 17<sup>th</sup> from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The work session is an educational opportunity for the Board. Members are welcome to attend as guests. The log-in for the work session is available on the RPEC website at [www.rpecwa.org](http://www.rpecwa.org).

Guests will be asked to submit questions via the Chat feature in Zoom. When a meeting summary is developed for record-keeping purposes, it will include the questions submitted by meeting guests and the answers to each question.

### **Associate Membership Program Now Available**

RPEC has revised the Associate Membership program, and information about the updated program is now available on the website. Public sector employees who are within 18 months of retirement are eligible to join RPEC as Associate Members. To elevate the value of Associate membership and to increase the number of members who transition from Associate to full membership upon retirement, Associate members will pay a nominal fee to cover production and mailing costs for the resources they receive from RPEC, and in return they will receive their first 3 months of full membership for free when they become a dues paying member. Do you have friends who are still working and will be retiring soon? Please invite them to join as Associate Members. Please meet with union locals in your area to ask

them to provide gifted memberships to those poised for retirement. Associate members can sign up on the website at [www.rpecwa.org](http://www.rpecwa.org).

### **Registration Now Open for Written & Verbal Testimony Educational Webinar, October 24, 10-11 AM**

Did you know that one of the best ways to strengthen mental processing in retirement is by trying something new? Would you like to learn how to provide written and verbal testimony for legislative hearings? Please register to attend a special member-only, one-hour program to learn the basics of providing written and verbal testimony. The session will be taught by RPEC members, as well as members of RPEC's professional team. Register at [www.rpecwa.org](http://www.rpecwa.org).

### **New Resources for PEBB & Medicare Open Enrollment Periods**

RPEC has launched a special resource page on the website to help members navigate PEBB Open Enrollment (Oct. 27-Nov. 24) and Medicare Open Enrollment (Oct. 15 through Dec. 7). The new resource page includes recorded webinars covering the PEBB plans, as well as the [new Medicare Open Enrollment Jumpstart Tool Kit](#) from the Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA).

Registration is still open for a member-only informational Zoom program on November 7<sup>th</sup> to help members understand the differences among the healthcare plans available through Medicare Open Enrollment. Register at [www.rpecwa.org](http://www.rpecwa.org).

### **Important Dates**

Visit the RPEC website at [www.rpecwa.org](http://www.rpecwa.org) for the full calendar:

- Oct. 10: Legislative Committee (10:00 a.m.)
- Oct. 16: Virtual Senior Lobby Fall Conference (9:00 a.m.)
- Oct. 17: Executive Board Work Session (10:00 a.m.)
- Oct. 20: Meet the New DRS Director (10:00 a.m.)
- Oct. 21: Select Committee on Pension Policy (10:00 a.m.)
- Oct. 23: Healthcare Workgroup (3:30 p.m.)
- Oct 24: Written & Verbal Testimony Educational Webinar (10:00 a.m.)
- Oct. 29: WSARA Annual Convention (9:00--3:00 p.m.)