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Retired Public Employees Council
Chapter 30 – South King County
Debbie Haigh, President – (509) 688-9489
debbie14haigh@yahoo.com

Date: Wednesday, January 8th, 2025
Time: 12:00 PM
Place: Tuscany Restaurant
Address: 21830 Marine View Dr S, Des Moines, WA 98198

CHAPTER MEETING: The next Chapter 30 meeting will be held at 12:00 pm on **January 8th**, 2025, at the Tuscany Restaurant, located at 21830 Marine View Dr S Des Moines WA 98198. The Chapter will pay up to \$20.00 for your lunch (excluding tip, taxes, alcoholic drinks). The executive board will meet one hour (11:00 am) prior to the general union meeting.

EXECUTIVE BOARD: President Debbie Haigh, Vice President George Chan, Secretary Wilhelmina Daniel, At-Large (1st position) Ida Ott, At-Large (2nd position) Harris Smith, At-Large (3rd position) Benjamin Girlando, Trustee Sharon Peterson, and Trustee Jennifer Jackson.

PRESENTER: Representative Mia Gregerson couldn't meet with us at our November meeting due to a conflict of schedules. She will be at our January meeting. Mia Gregerson was first appointed in 2013 to represent the 33rd Legislative District, including SeaTac, Normandy Park, Des Moines, and parts of Kent, Burien, Renton, and unincorporated King County. Mia also served as Mayor of the SeaTac City Council from 2008 to 2015. Many of her legislative accomplishments include serving as Chair of the House Members of Color Caucus and Vice Chair of the House Appropriations Committee, expanding voting rights, ensuring our residents are housed, helping to establish Washington's first Office of Equity, championing statewide digital equity, and being part of the so-called "food fighters" who work together on legislation to help the food insecure. Remember the House Appropriations Committee considers the operating budget bill and related legislation, budget processes, and fiscal issues such as pension policy and compensation. The committee also considers bills with operating budget fiscal impacts. Please come to this meeting to meet Rep. Gregerson and discuss concerns impacting retirees.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING: I attended my first meeting in November, and we had a very busy schedule. We approved the final drafts on the checklist for a fiscally responsible membership-driven/union organization, checklist for fiscal responsibility for organizational leadership, checklist for a strong RPEC chapter, checklist for an effective membership-driven/union, and the checklist for RPEC'S leaders to create & sustain an effective membership/union organization. You can review these checklists on RPEC's website.

RESOURCES: I would like to encourage to go to rpecwa.org to find out about our affiliate unions, affiliate organizations (which include Washington State Senior Citizen's Lobby, Washington State Alliance for Retired Americans, and Washington Education Association-Retired), Washington State Agencies, and Federal Resources. We are not alone in our fight for better healthcare, pension protection, and to stop others who are trying to eliminate or Social Security.

Debbie Haigh
President, RPEC Chapter 30

JANUARY 2025 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Happy New Year! January's Monthly Letter includes a short round up of our shared successes and includes a look forward to the new legislative session and our collective work with legislators during RPEC's 2025 virtual Legislative Week, February 3-7.

2024 Statewide Successes

2024 was another successful year for RPEC, thanks to you. Our union is powered by your time and talents. Thank you for your many contributions to RPEC in the past year.

Federal legislation/policy

- Successfully mobilized to urge Congress to pass the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82), which repeals key provisions that negatively impact public sector retirees and their dependents. (At the time of publication, the bill was poised for a vote in the Senate, following successful passage in the House.)
- Secured unanimous approval on two resolutions at the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) annual Convention to increase funding and staffing levels for the Social Security Administration.

State policy/legislation

- Conducted more than 25 meetings with key fiscal policy decision makers before and during the 2024 legislative session to advance RPEC's policy and legislative priorities.
- Secured a one-time 3% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for Plans 1 retirees through statewide advocacy and the passage of HB 1985.
- Worked successfully with the Health Care Authority to restructure Uniform Medical Plan (UMP) Classic Medicare with a Part D pharmacy component, saving retirees hundreds of dollars per month.
- Successfully mobilized to influence legislation dealing with pension security, health care affordability and healthcare access.
- Packed the Senate hearing room in September to urge the Select Committee on Pension Policy (SCPP) to approve a bill to restore a recurring COLA to Plans 1 retirees.
- Successfully mobilized members in support of the proposed recurring COLA legislation.
- Secured unanimous approval of a proposed bill for the 2025 legislative session to restore a recurring COLA for Plans 1 retirees.

Member outreach and engagement

- Organized a successful in-person RPEC Convention with more than 200 attendees.
- Launched a Medicare open enrollment website page with useful links and unique podcasts, including three episodes of RPEC On Air, to help members navigate Medicare open enrollment and open enrollment for the Public Employees Benefits Board.
- Launched RPEC On Air, a podcast with a growing listenership. Topics have ranged from updates on legislation to features about how to sign up for Medicare for the first time.
- Launched a revitalized website (rpecwa.org) with new engagement tools to enable all members to be better informed about healthcare, pension, and federal advocacy topics and efforts.
- Revitalized Chapter 24 (Mason County), which sent three delegates to the 2024 Convention.

Virtual Legislative Week, February 3-7

Thank you for registering for RPEC's virtual Legislative Week (registration deadline – January 10th). All registered members will receive an orientation packet prior to the February 3rd training. Your legislator meeting schedule will be emailed to you prior to Legislative Week. Coordinating Legislative Week is a sizable task. In past years, the Council has coordinated more than 90 legislative meetings involving more than 200 members and retirees from the Washington Education Association - Retired. Please watch your mail for your orientation packet and check your email for any updates. We look forward to your participation in February.

Governor's Preliminary Budget Funds One Time COLA for PERS/TRS 1

Governor Inslee unveiled his preliminary budget for the 2025-2027 biennium on December 17th. Through our advocacy efforts, the Governor included funding for a one-time 3% cost of living adjustment (COLA) with a \$110 cap for retirees vested in Plans 1. It is unclear whether funding has been set aside to establish the recurring COLA in 2026. In November, the Select Committee on Pension Policy (SCPP) unanimously approved a proposed bill for the 2025 legislative session to provide a one-time 3% COLA (with no cap) in 2025 and a recurring 3% COLA in 2026. The SCPP-sponsored bill has not been pre-filed at the time of publication. It is unclear if the references to bills in the proposed budget refer to this proposed 2025 SCPP bill or another piece of legislation that has not yet been pre-filed. The Governor's budget becomes the starting point from which the Legislature will craft the biennial budget. The Legislature has no obligation to accept the Governor's funding priorities or revenue assumptions. Our collective advocacy during Legislative Week and throughout the legislative session will be important to keep this priority funded! Keep apprised of RPEC's legislative efforts by attending the weekly Legislative Update Calls, which begin on Friday, January 17th at 2 p.m. The Legislative Update Calls are held weekly via Zoom through the end of the legislative session. Learn more at www.rpecwa.org.

Important Dates

Visit the RPEC website at www.rpecwa.org for the full calendar:

Dec. 23 – Jan. 1: Council Office closed, winter holidays

Jan. 2: Council Office returns to regular business hours

Jan. 7: Policy Review Workgroup meeting (1:00 pm)

Jan. 9: Healthcare Workgroup meeting (3:30 pm)

- Jan. 10:** Legislative Week registration deadline (register online)
- Jan. 13:** Start of Legislative Session
 - Senior Lobby (10:00 am)
- Jan. 17:** Weekly Legislative Update Call (2:00 pm; weekly through late April)
- Jan. 20:** Council Office closed in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Jan. 23:** Healthcare Workgroup meeting (3:30 pm)
- Jan. 24:** Weekly Legislative Update Call (2:00 pm)
- Jan. 27:** Finance Committee meeting (10:00 am)
- Jan. 30:** Membership Committee meeting (10:00 am)
- Jan. 31:** Legislative Committee meeting (10:00 am)
 - Weekly Legislative Update Call (2:00 pm)