



Retired Public Employees Council of Washington

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Washington State Supreme Court Rules Against Public Sector Retirees

Olympia, Washington - August 14, 2014 - Today the Washington State Supreme Court ruled that the legislature had the right to eliminate COLA protections and gainsharing rights for Washington's public employees.

The Retired Public Employees Council of Washington ([RPEC](#)) and other public employee groups had sued the state after the legislature acted to repeal these benefits and lower court decisions overturned the cuts. The Supreme Court decisions today, however, mean that Plan 1 members will have no future cost of living adjustments.

"The court's decisions mean that retirees will face a future of stagnant benefits while the cost of living and medical costs continue to escalate" said Maria Britton-Sipe, Executive Director of RPEC. She noted that the average benefit for Plan 1 members is \$1,892 per month and the average benefit for Plan 2 members is \$1,256 per month. "These benefit cuts are a slap in the face to retirees who are struggling to maintain their standard of living and dignity as they age" she said.

The only bright spot in the rulings was that some Plan 2 members will continue to have access to earlier retirement under some circumstances. That benefit would have been jeopardized if the court had overturned the COLA and gainsharing repeal.

Britton-Sipe said that the rulings today should motivate retirees and active public employees to push legislators to reinstate the lost benefits through the political process. She noted that retirees are a growing segment of the electoral process and are more than willing to hold legislative candidates accountable for their positions on pension security.

The full text of the decisions can be found here:

<http://www.courts.wa.gov/opinions/index.cfm?fa=opinions.recent>, then click on Case Info/File 88546-0.

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