



## RPEC 2023-2024 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

As approved by the RPEC Executive Board: August 22, 2023



### TOP TIER PRIORITIES

- Be aggressive in maintaining and improving the financial integrity of the State retirement system:
  - Support full funding of employer contribution rates to pension plans as recommended by the State Actuary
  - 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
- Ensure comprehensive, affordable Public Employees' Benefits Board (PEBB) self-insured Medicare benefits by increasing the state's contribution to premiums. Urge PEBB to contain cost increases to participants, retain federal funds, and expand government self-insured Medicare health care options for Medicare-eligible retirees.
- Restore a permanent Plan 1 COLA when a reasonable unfunded liability balance is attained and maintained, as affirmed by the Office of the State Actuary. 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.
- 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.
- Protect and expand Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid and prevent privatization of Medicare.

### STATE PRIORITIES

#### **Retirement**

- Be aggressive in maintaining and improving the financial integrity of the State retirement system:
  - Support full funding of employer contribution rates to pension plans as recommended by the State Actuary
  - 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
- Restore a permanent Plan 1 COLA when a reasonable unfunded liability balance is attained and maintained, as affirmed by the Office of the State Actuary. 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.
- 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.
- 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.

- Advocate for retirement security, particularly defined benefit-style pensions for all Washingtonians.
- Work in coalition with groups advocating for legislation that improves access to affordable housing.
- Work in coalition with groups seeking to correct the regressive nature of Washington's tax code.

### **Health Care**

- Ensure comprehensive, affordable PEBB self-insured Medicare benefits by increasing the state's contribution to premiums. Urge PEBB to contain cost increases to participants, retain federal matching funds for self-insured Medicare options, and expand government self-insured options for Medicare-eligible retirees. Maintain retiree government self-insured health insurance options through PEBB at affordable costs and adequate level of benefit.
- Create access to affordable health care for all retired public sector employees.
- Support and monitor the Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) in its regulation of Medicare supplement policies and rates to ensure quality plans are as affordable as possible. Advocate for the OIC to have a non-voting seat on PEBB.
- Work to improve benefits and maintain and expand access to Vision, Dental and Hearing coverage.

### **Contracting Out/Privatization**

- Oppose efforts to privatize or contract out public services.

## **FEDERAL PRIORITIES**

### **Social Security and Medicare**

- Continue fight to protect Social Security and Medicare from privatization.
- Protect and expand Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.
- Promote fair premiums for Medicare coverage.
- Support a Federal Government sponsored Universal Health Care Program.
- Work to pass legislation that eliminates the contribution cap to Social Security (\$142,800 in 2021) and adopts the CPI-E to calculate the cost-of-living adjustments.
- Support the full implementation of the Older Americans Act.
- Pursue affordable long-term care options for retirees.
- 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 to 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.

### **RPEC ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION**

- Continue to encourage RPEC member-volunteers to advance RPEC's legislative agenda, support lobbying activities year around and to create relationships with their Legislators.