

The State legislative site is now updated!

Here are the relevant pages to use:
Washington State Legislature (main page)
<http://www.leg.wa.gov/wsladm/default.htm>

Especially relevant pages
Find out who represents you - District Finder - use this page to determine member legislative districts (these are the new redistricted districts)!!!
<http://dfind.leg.wa.gov/dfinder.cfm>

JCPP
<http://www.leg.wa.gov/jcpp>

HOUSE MEMBERS
<http://www.leg.wa.gov/house/hadm/name/htm>

SENATE MEMBERS
<http://www.leg.wa.gov/senate/members/default.htm>

CONGRESSIONAL INFORMATION
<http://www.leg.wa.gov/common/maps/congdist.htm>

HOUSE COMMITTEE MEMBERS
<http://www.leg.wa.gov/house/opr/stcommpg.htm>

SENATE COMMITTEE MEMBERS
<http://www.leg.wa.gov/rosters/senate/scommitteemembersbycommittee.html>

BILL INFORMATION
<http://www.leg.wa.gov/wsladm/bills.cfm>

LAWS AND AGENCY RULES
<http://slc.leg.wa.gov/default.htm>

CALENDARS & LEG. MEETING SCHEDULES
<http://www.leg.wa.gov/wsladm.calendar.cfm>

RPEC Website Discussion Forum a Flop

In a continued effort to increase communication between members and chapters due to requests from the membership, your website editor implemented a discussion forum and an invitation to join was sent out to all Chapter Legislative contacts (approx. 80 people). Only 3 people showed interest and only one posted comments.

Anyone perusing the website would have also stumbled across the forum.

As a result of the lack of interest in this tool, the discussion forum will be discontinued this month. We can only supply the tools and the means, for you to be involved.

New Membership Database Implemented

The Council Office has been working since 1981 with a 30 year-old data program housed by WFSE and time has finally caught up with it. It has been having increased problem staying functional and operational and the office is often left without the means to work with member data.

Effective in April, the Council Office began using this new database program, written in-house by staff, full-time. There are a couple "bugs" yet to work out of the system, but we are now operating with a program that is functional during all business hours.

This program has streamlined much of the user input and lookup time, which in the long run, will save RPEC money on staff time.

The program also did not cost the organization anything, except a few hairs pulled out by an already balding staff member, as it was being developed in the office.



Retired Public Employees Council of Washington

May 2003 www.rpecwa.org Toll-Free: 1-800-562-6097 Direct: 360-352-8262

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SHB 1204, the right decision?

President's Message

from George Masten

Taking the role of devil's advocate, one RPEC member asked: Since Substitute House Bill 1204, establishing a select committee on pension policy, passed the Senate 45 to 3, should we examine whether we're on the right side of the issue?

In the last newsletter, I outlined our unsuccessful fight in the House of Representatives to improve Substitute House Bill 1204, which creates a select committee on pension policy dominated by legislators and employers. SHB 1204 is being touted as a "first step" toward improving how decisions are made over pension benefits and funding – a process called pension governance. It's an understatement to say the Legislature is not eager to relinquish control.

In the Senate, a small opportunity to improve the bill was dashed by testimony from a number of the smaller active and retiree groups, who bought in to the idea that something, however insignificant, was better than nothing. We don't believe our price for taking the Legislature off the hook should be so cheap!

RPEC, the Federation, the active and retired State Patrol, and LEOFF 1 retirees argued at hearings and with individual senators that the proposed committee lacked balance and fiduciary responsibility. We said that SHB 1204 should be shelved and a better solution developed for the 2004 session. We made it clear that together we represent over 50,000 active and retired members of the systems, far more than the other groups, and our members' views should prevail. As in the House, many senators agreed with us but were unwilling to force a vote on our amendments, either in committee or on the floor.

We're asking for progress we can build on in the future, not token representation on a committee controlled by legislators and employers. I believe SHB 1204 represents the first step in a journey of a thousand miles – without shoes. We're right to say no and use every opportunity to kill the bill, including asking the governor to veto it.

Executive Director's Report

from Cassandra de la Rosa

No one gets faster attention from lawmakers than their constituents. That's what members of the RPEC Legislative Committee learned when they found themselves in the role of citizen-lobbyists on March 25. The Lobby Day was an activity to make state senators aware of how strongly we opposed SHB 1204 – the pension governance bill. The effort was sponsored by RPEC, the Federation of State Employees, Washington State Patrol retired and active, and LEOFF 1 retirees.

Chair Glen Hallman agreed to suspend his regularly scheduled meeting to have committee and other RPEC members who joined us talk to legislators about the importance of having a balanced committee with fiduciary responsibility in charge of setting pension policy. Altogether, over 50 people from the various groups turned out. They formed teams and, armed

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OUR STRENGTH IS YOUR SECURITY!

