



# Retired Public Employees Council of Washington

## CHAPTER 19 KITSAP COUNTY

**PRESIDENT: SANDIE REYNOLDS: 253-820-6620 OR [sandielee@comcast.net](mailto:sandielee@comcast.net)**

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### **NEXT MEETING:**

**Meeting Date: Wednesday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**Meeting Time: 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM**

**Meeting Location: All Star Lanes & Casino**

**Meeting Address: 10710 Silverdale Way NW, Silverdale, WA 98383**

Dear members,

Well, can you believe it? 2024 is just around the corner! As we recover from the pandemic, I have noticed that many of our members are super busy with so many changes that have happened in our lives.

The Chapter 19 officers and executive officer met earlier this month to discuss our venue and what we wanted to continue to do for our meetings. We decided that we will continue to meet at All Star Lanes, as usual. Our meetings will be held every other month, starting with our meeting on January 10<sup>th</sup>. We will no longer be providing lunch unless you are a new member or guest. Our cost for the meeting room is \$150.00 for each meeting and there has been a strong show by members to stay in this central location. Members also wanted more frequent meetings, and it was decided that every other month would be better than quarterly.

I'd like to take a moment to recognize those who do volunteer work in our community. Many of us share and donate our time for the needs of others who are struggling in our communities.

Marva Lang, our Vice President, sits on the panel for the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance. She and others have been working hard with law makers to refine bills on issues such as rent stabilization. She is also a board member on G2 Housing. She works with other community members to address issues such as homelessness and housing affordability and does some hands-on work providing food, warm clothing, and shelter searches.

Theresa Adams, our Treasurer, and Elayne Stodola have logged a combined 1,600 hours working for the HUB in Mason County. Their work has helped to provide medical equipment and supplies to seniors through a lending library of donated goods. Wheelchairs, walkers, and canes are some of those things that help patients, and their families defray some of the costs for these expensive items. Theresa has also mentioned that they do have a "Widow's Group" and other social activities that they help with through the HUB.

After a lifetime of service to others, our members continue that theme and continue to make a difference. I welcome other highlights of volunteering being done by our members. Send me an e-mail if you want me to mention an organization that you volunteer for and that serves our members and the aging community.

Jennifer Myers will be our guest in January. She is in partnership with Kitsap County Aging and Long-Term Care.

There is so much more information to cover, so it will be presented at our next meeting. There is a great deal happening and much about our pensions and our future that we need to make sure gets to our members. PLEASE come and join us at our next meeting!

Sandie Reynolds  
Chapter 19 President

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### **January 2024 Executive Director's Report**

Happy New Year and Here We Go!

Welcome to the New Year and a short legislative session kicks off on January 8<sup>th</sup>. The short session will conclude by late March. Thus, bills will be heard in committee within the first full week of January. Hold on and stay tuned!

This monthly letter summarizes some of RPEC's noteworthy achievements in 2023 and includes a few priorities for the month of January.

#### **2023 Highlights**

- Adoption of RPEC's strategic plan by the Executive Board. The organization has not had a strategic plan in over 5 years.

#### **Awards**

- Awarded the Washington State Labor Council's (WSLC) Mother Jones Group Award, along with partner organizations, for our legislative successes regarding healthcare access and affordability.
- Awarded Senior Champion of the Year with the Washington Education Association-Retired (WEA-R) for our healthcare advocacy work.
- Awarded Advocate of the Year by WEA-R for our healthcare advocacy leadership.

#### **Legislative Efforts**

- Passage of SB 5350, which provided a one-time 3% cost of living adjustment for retirees vested in Plans 1.
- Passage of a proviso that increased accountability for the Health Care Authority (HCA) and required that they provide reports to the Legislature. The proviso also required the agency to explore plan options with benefits greater than or equal to UMP Classic Medicare but more affordable.
- Safeguarded the UMP Classic Medicare healthcare plan, offered by the Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB).
- Coordinated 60 listening sessions with retirees and HCA to glean insights to inform policy decisions and improve services to retirees. RPEC, with partners, recruited more than 170 retirees to participate.

- Successful mobilizations on both state and federal legislation. State mobilizations have averaged 1,000 PRO sign-ins. More than 500 members signed onto the RPEC's Call-to-Action regarding federal government funding.
- Successful Legislative Day which included 143 members who participated in 70 meetings with legislators/staff.
- Expansion of federal advocacy efforts to include meetings with healthcare policy staff working for members of Washington's Congressional Legislation.
- Launch of the RPEC Speakers' Series featuring Congresswoman Maria Gluesenkamp Perez.

## **Membership**

- Recruitment of the highest number of new members in more than a decade. The Council Office's efforts this spring added 1,600 new members to RPEC!
- Significant growth in member contributions to the RPEC Political Action Committee, totaling \$85,880.18 – a more than 25% increase from 2022.
- Implementation of an all-member written survey.

## **Communications & Engagement**

- Launch of the weekly NewsFlash reports.
- High levels of digital engagement by members through increased content generation on the RPEC website, social media, and through the weekly NewsFlash.
- Developed a three-part webinar series with Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA) about navigating open enrollment and the plans available by the Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB).
- Led well attended webinars initiated by RPEC with DRS and HCA, and hosted a first ever "Members-Only Benefits Webinar."

## **Labor**

- Secured RPEC President Clair Olivers as a presenter at the Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE) Policy Meeting and RPEC at the AFSCME Council 2 Executive Board meeting– both firsts!
- Expanded relationships with the Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE), AFSCME Council 2, and the Teamsters.
- Standing-room only presentations by RPEC Membership Coordinator at the WFSE and Council 2 Conventions.

## **Federal Relations**

### **Fiscal Stability Act Poses Threat to Social Security and Medicare Funding**

The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Retirees and the Alliance for Retired Americans (ARA) have concern about a new piece of bi-partisan legislation introduced in the Senate in November. The Fiscal Stability Act (S. 3262) would create a fiscal commission that will produce a plan to improve the nation's fiscal trajectory and decrease the national debt. Retiree organizations fear the real agenda is to slash funding for Social Security and Medicare for seniors. RPEC will work, in concert with other AFSCME Retiree chapters nationwide, to oppose the bill and the companion legislation (H.R.

5779) introduced in the House. A detailed [position paper](https://retiredamericans.org) about the proposed debt commission is available at <https://retiredamericans.org>.

Keep apprised of RPEC's work at a federal level by reading the weekly NewsFlash and visiting [www.rpecwa.org](http://www.rpecwa.org).

## **State Relations & Advocacy**

### **Two priorities emerge for Legislative Day, January 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Through the advocacy efforts of RPEC and our retiree organization partners, the Select Committee on Pension Policy will advance a bill next legislative session that not only provides another one-time cost-of-living adjustment to retirees vested in Plans 1, but also expands the maximum cap to \$125 per month.

Moreover, RPEC, in concert with the Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) Stakeholders' Medicare Coalition (which RPEC formed and leads), has initiated both a budget proviso that will increase the Medicare Explicit Subsidy provided to Medicare-eligible retirees who obtain their healthcare benefits from the Health Care Authority (HCA)/PEBB. The Medicare Explicit Subsidy reduces the monthly premium costs for the most expensive healthcare plans offered and managed by HCA/PEBB.

### **HCA Update**

In the last legislative session, RPEC, in concert with the PEBB Stakeholders' Medicare Coalition, initiated a proviso requiring the HCA to hold listening sessions with retirees to ascertain their needs and to use this information to inform policy and to improve communication and services. The proviso also required the agency to report the findings to the Legislature. The report will be available soon on the HCA website at [www.hca.wa.gov](http://www.hca.wa.gov). The report will be available under About HCA, Data/Reports. The Coalition will study the report and will be referencing it throughout the 2024 legislative session to ensure HCA honors the input of retirees moving forward.

### **Legislative Update Calls Begin Weekly in January**

This month marks the end of the monthly Legislative Update Calls. Starting on January 12<sup>th</sup>, the calls will be held weekly each Friday at 2 p.m. and will extend through the end of the legislative session in late March.

### **Executive Board approves Strategic Plan**

The Executive Board approved RPEC's strategic plan at its November meeting. The plan will guide RPEC's priorities through 2027. The five goal areas relate to: organizational sustainability, member recruitment, member retention and engagement, member communications, and federal advocacy. The plan was informed by research conducted in Spring 2023 by AFSCME Retirees and data gathered by the Council Office.

The Board also appointed the Strategic Plan Ad Hoc Committee to outline potential next steps for the Board to implement the plan. The Committee is chaired by **Maurice Garrott**,

Vice President and Chair of the Membership Committee, and includes President **Clair Olivers**, District 1 Representative **Cheryl Moser**, District 3 Representative **Kandy Kraig**, District 9 Representative **Alma-jean Marion**, and me.

A backgrounding document will be available at [www.rpecwa.org](http://www.rpecwa.org) in January. Executive Board members will be sharing more information about the plan in the coming months at regional meetings.

### **Upcoming Events**

All meetings below will be held on Zoom. Visit [www.rpecwa.org](http://www.rpecwa.org) for a full calendar of Council Office and chapter meetings.

- Jan 2 – Council Office opens
- Jan 3 – Deadline to register for Legislative Day
- Jan 8 – First Day of the 2024 Legislative Session
- Jan 11 – Healthcare Workgroup, 3:30 p.m.
- Jan 12 – Legislative Committee meeting, 10 a.m.
- Jan 12 – Beginning of weekly Legislative Update Calls, 2 p.m.
- Jan 15 – Senior Lobby, 10 a.m.
- Jan 19 – Weekly Legislative Update Call, 2 p.m.
- Jan 22 – Legislative Day, 9 a.m.
- Jan 26 – Weekly Legislative Update Call, 2 p.m.
- Feb 1 – PEBB Retreat, 9 a.m.

Best,  
Laurie