



opeiu8/aflcio

# Retired Public Employees Council Chapter 9 – Clark County

*Sam Arola, President*

**(360) 606-1806 – [searola@tds.net](mailto:searola@tds.net)**

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>Thursday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024</b>
<b>Meeting Time:</b>	<b>12:00 PM Lunch Followed by Meeting</b>
<b>Meeting Location:</b>	<b>Peachtree Restaurant &amp; Pie House</b>
<b>Meeting Address:</b>	<b>6600 NE Hwy 99 Vancouver, WA 98662</b>

## CHAPTER NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

**Nominations: March 21<sup>st</sup> | Elections: April 18<sup>th</sup>**

Greetings Chapter 9 Members,

Please join us on **Thursday, March 21<sup>st</sup>**, for good conversation with your fellow retirees and to discuss the outcomes of RPEC's efforts this legislative session.

Per our chapter's constitution, we plan to seek nominations for our 2024-2025 officers at the March 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, with elections at the April 18<sup>th</sup> meeting. In the meantime, please consider if you would like to serve as an officer in our RPEC chapter.

Also, the RPEC Biennial Convention will be held in Wenatchee from September 24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>. If you are interested in serving your chapter by attending the RPEC Convention as a delegate, please attend our March nominations and April elections meeting to run for a delegate position.

### **COLA, PEBB Month of Death Bill Pass Legislature**

On the evening of Wednesday, February 28, the Washington State Senate unanimously passed Substitute House Bill 1985 and House Bill 2481, RPEC's top priority bills. As identical versions of both bills were previously passed by the Washington State House of Representatives, both pieces of legislation have secured final passage and will now be headed to Governor Jay Inslee for signature. .... Read more at <http://www.rpecwa.org/cola-pebb-month-of-death-bill-pass-legislature/>

### **Looking Ahead to November**

The passage of SHB 1985 and HB 2481 signify the end to another successful legislative session for RPEC. These bills passed thanks to the nearly 13,000 RPEC members who dedicate their time, energy, and money to advocacy. Together, we have worked to build relationships with our legislators and educate them on our issues. We must now look ahead to November and shift our focus to re-electing legislators who have worked hard for us. We must also identify new candidates who support our issues and help them run for office. The only path to a successful 2025 Legislative Session is a successful election in November. Stayed tuned for opportunities to participate in RPEC's political action program.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the March meeting.

Sam Arola,  
President, Chapter 9  
Retired Public Employees Council of Washington

---

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

### **Federal Advocacy**

**Call to action on The Fiscal Commission Act of 2023:** Your federal retirement benefits are at risk if Congress passes [The Fiscal Commission Act of 2023 \(H.R. 5779\)](#). This legislation will create a 16-member fiscal commission to search for ways to reduce the national deficit and balance the national budget. Funding for Social Security and Medicare will be targeted for cuts. **Call 844-331-0441 today! Tell Congress to vote NO on this bill and similar proposals calling for fiscal commissions that aim to reduce your hard-earned retirement benefits.** A detailed [position paper](#) about the proposed debt commission is available at <https://retiredamericans.org>.

### **Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) Update**

Based on the information available to date, it appears the Health Care Authority (HCA) will recommend the PEB Board adopt a new pharmacy benefit for Uniform Medical Plan (UMP) Classic Medicare at its April 11 meeting. The medical portion of the plan will remain unchanged. The pharmacy benefit will transition to a Part D employer-managed plan - eligible for federal subsidies. With the transition to the Part D plan, retirees are expected to see a decrease in monthly premiums in 2025. Moda will remain as the plan administrator to provide continuity and a seamless transition for UMP Classic Medicare enrollees. If you are interested in learning more about HCA's proposal to the PEB Board, visit [www.hca.wa.gov](http://www.hca.wa.gov). This topic will dominate the agenda of the Board's next meeting on March 21. You can access the agenda, meeting materials, and obtain the Zoom link by navigating to the Retiree webpage at [www.hca.wa.org](http://www.hca.wa.org). The PEB Board links are on the right side of the page. RPEC members wishing to comment during the meeting will have opportunities to do so.

### **State Advocacy**

The Legislative session will conclude on March 7. Thus, the information included in this Letter will only be current through the date of publication. To learn more about the status of RPEC's key legislative priorities, access the bill tracker at [www.rpecwa.org](http://www.rpecwa.org).

**SHB 1985: Ad Hoc COLA for PERS/TRS 1** – The House passed SHB 1985 in early February and funded it in their initial budget proposal. The bill has cleared Senate Ways & Means and Senate Rules and could be voted on the floor on any day. The bill is likely to be funded in the Legislature's final supplemental budget. If the legislation is funded in the final budget act and signed by the Governor, the COLA will be implemented in July.

**HB 2481: Month of Death Public Employees Benefits Board Benefit** – The bill waives the payment of healthcare premiums for plans managed by PEBB during a retiree's month of death. This bill also has a high likelihood of passing, given its broad support in both chambers.

*SSB 5986/HB 2285: Curbing out-of-pocket healthcare costs* – The bill curbs the cost for ground ambulance services for healthcare plan enrollees. The bill is supported by all RPEC's healthcare partners and has received strong bi-partisan support. It was sent to the Rules Committee on February 26.

*ESB 5241: Material changes to the healthcare marketplace* – This bill is designed to provide greater protections to consumers due to healthcare mergers, acquisitions, and contracting, with the goal of ensuring that consumers receive the same or greater access to quality, affordable care. The bill was sent to the Rules Committee on February 26.

*Legislative Updates:* The last weekly legislative update call will take place on March 8. All members are invited to attend from 2-3 p.m. The Zoom link is available at [www.rpecwa.org](http://www.rpecwa.org). A final legislative session report will be issued by the Council in April and available to all members on the website. Starting in April, the monthly legislative update calls will be held the first Friday of each month. Please join us on April 5 from 2-3 p.m.

### **Executive Board Update**

At the February 26 Executive Board meeting, the Board unanimously approved the formation of a special task force that will meet virtually to create a process, to be piloted this year and next, for regular review of the organization's governance and fiscal structures. Recruitment will begin soon. It is anticipated that the task force will begin meeting by Zoom in June. The Board also tasked the Membership Committee with developing plans to recruit and engage former union leaders and those with workplace leadership experience to become active in RPEC chapters. The Legislative Committee was tasked with embellishing the organization's federal policy and legislative agenda. The Executive Board's next meeting is on May 6 via Zoom. The link and more details are available at [www.rpecwa.org](http://www.rpecwa.org). All members are invited to attend.

### **Upcoming Events**

Visit [www.rpecwa.org](http://www.rpecwa.org) for a full calendar of Council Office and chapter meetings.

- March 14 Healthcare Workgroup (3:30 p.m.)
- March 15 Legislative Committee (10 a.m.)
- March 15 Open Zoom Convention Questions (10a.m.-4p.m.)
  - Stop by anytime if you have questions
- March 21 PEBB meeting (9-4 p.m.)
- March 22 Political Action Committee (10 a.m.)
- April 5 Monthly Legislative Update call (2 p.m.)
- April 11 PEBB meeting (9-4 p.m.)
- April 11 Healthcare Workgroup (3:30 p.m.)
- April 12 Legislative Committee (10 a.m.)
- April 16 Select Committee on Pension Policy (10 a.m.)
- April 19 Pension Policy Workgroup (10 a.m.)
- April 25 Membership Committee (10 a.m.)
- April 25 Healthcare Workgroup (3:30 p.m.)