



# Retired Public Employees Council Chapter 17 – Lewis County

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**Meeting Date:** Wednesday, August 3, 2022  
**Meeting Time:** 11:00 AM  
**Meeting Place:** Fort Borst Park, Centralia

Dear fellow Chapter 17 members,

Please join us at Fort Borst Park in Centralia for our annual picnic potluck meeting on Wednesday, August 3 at 11:00 AM. We will be in the lower part of the park at one of the covered picnic areas (look for the green balloons). Our member, Jon Gust, has offered to provide and bar-be-que hamburgers and hot dogs. Buns, condiments, tomatoes, onions, and lettuce will be provided along with plates, napkins, and silverware. Members have volunteered to bring the following side dishes: potato salad, shrimp and macaroni salad, baked beans, fruit, coleslaw, and desserts. Please bring your own drink item and your favorite potluck item or dessert, and join us for a fun time to sit and visit with Chapter 17 members. **New members are welcome! We are excited to meet you!**

**RPEC Membership Coordinator Emmett Mills** will join us at our picnic. He will give a brief presentation about the work that RPEC is doing in Olympia to protect our pensions and benefits.

See you on Wednesday, August 3!

Barb Hangartner  
President, RPEC Chapter 17

## **Executive Director's Report**

Dear RPEC Leaders:

Our big news coming out of last month was our astonishing victory at the June 30<sup>th</sup> virtual meeting of the Public Employees' Benefits Board (PEBB).

### **UMP Classic Medicare option still available**

I am deeply proud of the work we accomplished together to stop the PEBB's vote on the resolution to eliminate the UMP Classic Medicare plan on January 1, 2024. This policy decision would have eliminated this health care plan of choice for more than 53,000 retirees across the state. It also would have forced retirees, who are current UMP Classic Medicare subscribers, to largely choose from among Medicare Advantage plans, some of which have arduous preauthorization features that hinder or restrict access to medically necessary care.

RPEC led the statewide opposition effort, gathered the coalition partners, and orchestrated an intense and aggressive campaign to stop the vote and hold the agency accountable for a rigorous public engagement process to inform future medical plan choices. We were successful because of your quick action and that of our coalition partners. Thank you for sending emails, on short notice, to the Health Care Authority (HCA) and PEBB. And, for

emailing and calling your state representatives to apply pressure on PEBB to preserve the UMP Classic Medicare plan option. RPEC chapter leaders and district representatives called and emailed members to ensure full engagement. As a result of our collective work and that of our coalition partners, more than 300 retirees attended the June 30<sup>th</sup> PEBB meeting to protest. We triumphed! The resolution was taken completely off the docket! And, it was replaced with another resolution, offered by the AFSCME Council 28 board member, which added public accountability for PEBB to work with us on a rigorous, public engagement process to inform the development of healthcare policies for retirees.

There are far too many RPEC members and leaders to thank individually. That said, I do want to give special thanks to Elyette Weinstein, who serves as RPEC's representative on PEBB. We thank her for her leadership and expertise. Elyette alerted me and the Executive Board that this harmful policy would be on the agenda at the June 9<sup>th</sup> meeting. Her swift action enabled us to strategize and implement an extraordinary engagement effort.

We accomplished a great deal together in the span of only 2 ½ weeks! Our efforts were featured on the front page, below the masthead and "above the fold," in the July 7<sup>th</sup> print edition of the *Olympian* and its sister newspapers statewide. The article is available at the end of my monthly Membership Letter. It is also available on the Council website at [www.rpecwa.org](http://www.rpecwa.org).

Our work with PEBB is just beginning. Under RPEC's continued leadership, the coalition will be meeting with the PEBB director on July 22 to discuss a public engagement model designed to engage RPEC members and other Medicare-eligible retirees in a dialogue, about their healthcare needs, their concerns about privatized for-profit medical plans, and the features they appreciate most in the UMP Classic Medicare plan. From a policy standpoint, our focus in working with PEBB, which has been identified as a top legislative priority by the Legislative Committee, aims to ensure the UMP Classic Medicare option is retained and PEBB explores expanding access to government self-insured medical plan options.

To date, our coalition includes the Washington State Alliance for Retired Americans, Healthcare Is A Human Right, Washington Education Association-Retired, Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action, Social Security Works Washington, the American Federation of Teachers Washington, the Washington Federation of State Employees (AFSCME Council 28), and the Washington State Senior Citizen's Lobby.

### **Free annual RPEC membership**

Last month, RPEC kicked off the Recruit 2, Get Your Dues, a member-to-member recruitment campaign. For every two new members you recruit, you will receive a check for \$84! To get credit, your name must appear in the "Recruited by" field on the new members' membership applications. Associate members do not count until they become full dues-paying members. Checks will only be issued to current members in good standing. If you recruit just two new members, your annual membership in RPEC will be free for a year! The chapter that recruits the most new members per capita, and the top-performing member-to-member recruiters will be highlighted in the Executive Director's Monthly Letter and the quarterly newsletter. How many new members can you and your chapter recruit to join RPEC?

## **Convention update**

Just a quick reminder that all amendments and resolutions for our Convention in September are due to the Council Office on or before August 12<sup>th</sup>. Please direct them to Derek VanSpoor.

Delegates and leaders will receive more details about the Convention and COVID safety protocols in a few weeks.

## **PAC endorsements**

The PAC has finalized the list of endorsements for candidates running for state office. The PAC also finalized the list of candidates who will receive PAC funding. The list of endorsed candidates will be published in the summer edition of the Membership Newsletter, which will be mailed in a few weeks to all members. The endorsement and contribution lists have been informed by the endorsements made by WSLC and AFSCME Council 28, candidate questionnaires, candidate interviews, RPEC's relationship with incumbents, and insights from RPEC's lobbyist.

At this juncture in the election cycle, our PAC chairperson and Executive Committee are in the process of interviewing all three candidates for Secretary of State to identify an endorsement(s). Moreover, our chapters are busy interviewing candidates for local offices. Some have finalized their endorsement lists and have identified the candidates who will receive campaign contributions.

Finally, as candidates sprint toward and prepare for success in the primary elections taking place on August 2, this is the ideal time to get involved in the campaigns of those who have been endorsed by RPEC and your local chapters. Volunteering is a great way to introduce those running for office for the first time to RPEC and our legislative priorities.

## **PAC fund-raiser fast approaching**

In addition to your generous cash and pension-deduction contributions to the PAC, RPEC will host a special fund-raising event at Convention, September 27-29. Chapters and individual members are encouraged to donate items, from original artwork and one-of-a-kind items to excursions, experiences, and gift baskets. All proceeds will be directed to the PAC for campaign contributions to endorsed state and federal candidates. Do you have an item that you wish to donate to raise funds for the PAC? Reach out to your chapter president with details. Every chapter is responsible for transporting their donated items to our in-person Convention, which will held in Wenatchee.

## **Monthly Leadership Calls begin July 22**

Council staff will be leading monthly Leadership Calls for all chapter leaders and anyone interested in learning more about chapter leadership. The schedule of topics for the monthly Leadership Calls is available on the Council website at [www.rpecwa.org](http://www.rpecwa.org). The summer Leadership Calls will be held on July 22 and August 19.

## **WSARA update**

The Washington State Alliance for Retired Americans (WSARA) is working in collaboration with Senator Patty Murray's congressional re-election campaign to create Seniors for Patty Murray, a campaigning unit dedicated to educating and engaging retirees. Volunteers are needed to join this effort to help with message development for campaign materials, coordinating and staffing campaign events, phone banking and more. The effort is just getting underway and there are many opportunities available. If you are interested in

getting involved, contact Jackie Boschok, president of WSARA, via email at [wsarapresident@hotmail.com](mailto:wsarapresident@hotmail.com). Please reach out to Jackie by July 17, if possible, to express your interest.

All RPEC members are invited to participate in two free virtual conferences taking place this month. Both will have exceptional programs on topics of interest to RPEC members. The Alliance for Retired Americans (ARA), Western Division, will hold its annual conference on Tuesday, July 19. Register here for free: [Regional Meeting Registration](#). ARA's National Conference will be held July 27 and 28. Register here for free: [National Meeting Registration](#)

### **Nominees sought for Norm Schut Award**

Please send in your nominations for the Norm Schut Award. The award is given to a member in good standing who has provided exceptional service to RPEC. Nominations are due in writing to the Council Office no later than August 5. The awardee will be chosen by secret ballot by the Executive Board at the August 24 meeting. If you have questions, please call the Council Office.

### **Important Dates**

Visit the RPEC website at [www.rpecwa.org](http://www.rpecwa.org) for a full calendar of Council and chapter events and meetings. All meetings noted are virtual via Zoom except Convention, which will be held in person in Wenatchee in September.

**July 29:** Legislative Committee Meeting

**August 3:** Finance Committee Meeting

**August 3:** Monthly Legislative Update Call

**August 5:** Deadline for the submission of Norm Schut Award nominees

**August 13:** Resolution/amendment submittal deadline for Convention

**August 19:** Monthly Leadership Call (chapter leaders and all those interested)

**August 24:** Executive Board Meeting

**August 26:** Legislative Committee Meeting

**Sept 27-29:** RPEC Convention (in-person, Wenatchee)

**Nov 14:** Executive Board Meeting

Best,  
Laurie