



Update

Dear Friends,

August 14, 2019

Since my election to the KPERS Board of Trustees I have a new disclaimer that I must include in these updates from now on: "The views expressed in this update represent my views and/or the views of the Coalition. They do not in any way represent the views of KPERS Board of Trustees nor do I speak for them." (Ernie Claudel)

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday September 11. The agenda of this meeting will be to determine what KPERS COLA Bill we will propose and/or back. The October meeting will be held on the 9th. The purpose of this meeting will be to establish and assign the writing of the 2020 Email Blasts to the Legislature.

The monthly KCPR meeting was held on August 14th. Topics included were the article regarding a KPERS COLA in "Vested Interest", the KPERS Newsletter, wide ranging COLA discussions, Email Blasts for the 2020 Legislative session, and the COLA Talking Points listed later in this Update.

1. We have always noticed a retiree interest in a COLA, but we have noticed an 'uptick' in the numbers of the "why no COLA" type of question this summer. We are, therefore, providing you with some talking points. It is strongly suggested, if not 'almost required', that requests and comments to legislators be compiled by the individual. (We are often asked for a form letter or email, but we have been advised that is frowned upon to the point of being ignored.) THEREFORE, here are some you might use as ideas to compose a communication. This summer, as a benefit increase comes to mind, write down a few ideas as to why such an increase would be important to you. My guess is that putting together 4 or 5 essays this summer will not be difficult. SAVE these thoughts as come January, we will have an assignment for you! The importance of this activity cannot be over emphasized.
2. This summer and fall, while the legislature is not in session, contact your legislator and indicate that your support of she/he, in the next election, will depend on that legislator's position on a COLA for KPERS.
3. Here are some talking/writing points you can use to compose the suggestions in 2 and 3 above:
 - A. For years KPERS has not been a priority by the Kansas Legislature.
 - B. Since the last COLA was enacted in 1998 and made effective on July 1, 1997, the following has occurred in the **CPI (Consumer Price Index)**: The CPI for all items has increased by 50.0 percent from 1998-2017. The CPI for Medical Care has increased by 96.0 percent from 1998-2017.
 - C. KPERS began in 1971. Since the beginning there have been:
 - a. 5 Bonuses
 - b. 16 Permanent Benefit Increases (The last effective July 1, 1997.)
 - c. July 1, 2019, will mark 22 years w/o a COLA.
 - d. July 1, 2020, will mark 23 years w/o a COLA.
 - D. The COLA subject is an excellent motivation to encourage retirees to vote.
 - E. The latest figures from KPERS indicate that approximately 83.3% of retirees and beneficiaries have never received a post-retirement benefit adjustment.
 - F. Pensions benefit WOMEN – KPERS total participants, as of December 31, 2017, include approximately 311,490: 151,687 active members, 99,807 retired or beneficiaries, 59,996 inactive. Of the retired, approximately 62% are female, while 38% are male. Of the beneficiaries, approximately 82% are female, while 18% are male.
 - G. The 'average' monthly KPERS benefit is \$1296.00.
 - H. Pensions recruit, retain and save on turn over costs.-Recruitment and training are expensive in addition to the loss of knowledge and skill. In fact, 92% of Americans see pensions and public pensions as a recruitment tool!!
 - I. The following are a variety of items that speak directly to the rising concern over the lack of pensions in this country:
 - a. 25% of American workers don't plan to retire, presumably because they can't.

- b. The Homeless Rolls are growing among retirees.
- c. Presently the number of living over 75 is 21 Million. By 2039, there will be 42.5 Million.
- d. Twenty five of the 50 states (and the Federal Government) have been discussing this potentially. Five of the states have passed legislation to have some requirements set up for business owners. (Kansas is not one of the 5 or 25.)
- e. Across Party Lines Americans are becoming more and more concerned about retirement.
- f. Average working households have virtually no retirement savings because they don't have the money to invest.
- g. 71% Regard pensions better than 401 (k)s.
- h. 81% Strongly support pensions for teachers.
- i. 9 out of 10 Americans see pension benefit payments as too low or about right. (Only 7% see them as too high.)
- j. And finally, note the purpose of KPERS outlined in the original statute:

74-4901. Purpose of act. The purpose of this act is to provide an orderly means whereby employees of the participating employers who have attained retirement age as herein set forth may be retired from active service without prejudice and without inflicting a hardship upon the employees retired and to enable such employees to accumulate reserves for themselves and their dependents to provide for old age, death and termination of employment, and for the purpose of effecting economy and efficiency in the administration of government affairs.

Hope you have a wonderful week!!!

- Remember to send me your updated email address...also if for any reason you should no longer wish to receive this update, let me know at the address listed at the end of this "update," and I will contact you and remove you from the official mailing lists.
- Just a reminder, that this email is an official report of the Kansas Coalition of Public Retirees. If I editorialize, I will indicate that fact.
- Remember that we want you to forward this to other retirees and the "working" who will benefit from this information.
- The KCPR website is www.ksretirees.org

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