



# Update

Dear Friends,

June 19, 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 not be on the second Wednesday of August. It will be on AUGUST 14<sup>TH</sup>. Unless there is some pressing reason, unknown at the time, we will NOT have a July Meeting.

The monthly KCPR meeting was held on June 19th. As you are aware, Representative Dave Benson has become our 'COLA Champion', attempting several times to introduce COLA legislation on the Floor of the House (not in committee). We invited Rep. Benson to attend our KCPR meeting and he accepted. He continues to work on putting together a COLA Bill. We were able to have an interesting discussion around the possibilities.

We will continue to work on ideas regarding suggested benefit increase legislation.

We also discussed strategies for getting a benefit increase passed. To pass a bill it is necessary to "stir" up interest among the Legislators. The one thing agreed on in our discussions is that if a bill can pass the House and Senate, it is very likely that the Governor would sign it.

We have also repeatedly suggested that your communication is very important, more important in some ways than our combined lobbying efforts. Here is what we suggest:

1. This summer and fall, while the legislature is not in session, contact your legislator and indicate that your support of she or he, in the next election, will depend on that legislator's position on a COLA for KPERS.
2. 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.
3. Here are some facts that may be useful !!! (These are listed in no particular order!)
  - A. Pensions help 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.
  - B. The present annual average monthly KPERS Benefit, provided by KPERS, is \$1,296.00. (\$15,555.00 annually.)
  - C. The latest figures from KPERS indicate that approximately 83.3% of retirees and beneficiaries have never received a post-retirement benefit adjustment.
  - D. Since the last COLA was enacted in 1998 and made effective in July 1, 1997, the following has occurred in the CPI:
    - a. The CPI (Consumer Price Index) for all items has increased by 50.0 percent from 1998-2017.
    - b. The CPI for Medical Care has increased by 96.0 percent from 1998-2017.
  - E. 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.
- F. 77 % of the law enforcement agencies are not in KP&F – This equates to 1/3 of the officers who are enrolled in regular KPERS rather than KP&F. No figures are available for firefighters because KPERS only has classification information (KP&F or KPERS) and salary, not job descriptions.
  - a. FOP members are mainly in cities.
  - b. In most rural areas FF and Police officers are in KPERS not KP&F.

I know I don't need to ask you to stay cool, but it seems wise to suggest you keep your head down and you elevation up! In other words, beware of tornadoes and floods!!

- 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](http://www.ksretirees.org)

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