



Update

Dear Friends,

February 3, 2017

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)

This is the FINAL RALLY UPDATE FOR 2017!

And finally, it looks like we have drawn the 'fair' weather card!! (Well, at least tolerable!)

Friends,

This final UPDATE contains the following information:

1. A few final thoughts and suggestions on Monday.
2. Directions to a map of Capitol area and other parking information.
3. Who has been invited to speak at the Rally!
4. Directions on how to find the contact information for your representatives.
5. Specific bill information and bill numbers of interest to KPERS folks.
6. The Silver Haired Legislature joins the fight in support of KPERS.

These sections can be found under the initial paragraphs below. They are properly labeled! I have received more than one complaint about the length of these UPDATES. As a compromise, since I believe this information is important, this is my attempt to allow you to pick and choose!!

Because of what we believe to be the serious nature of all of this, PLEASE, if you don't attend, choose this day to contact your Senator or Representative. A review of contact information can be found below.

We at KCPR have become even more concerned about the health of KPERS after seeing the latest budget proposal submitted by the Governor. However, it appears that many in the legislature favor some sort of tax exemption roll back. That being said, this is not the time to reduce KPERS contributions.

The Governor has in the past "crowed" about how he saved KPERS and now has 'flip flopped' and wants not only to continue the short funding, but recommends not repaying the money (\$99 million) owed with interest as promised by the legislature and that he signed into law, as well as short funding KPERS for three more years.

The projections of the KPERS financial advisors advise that the 8% investment return projection may no longer be a freezable projection is even more of a concern. (The KPERS Board recently voted to reduce the projection to 7.75% on this professional advice.) You will recall that 60% of the Trust Fund balance has come from investment income. If the experts are correct and the Governor gets his way, there will be less money available to make a lesser percentage. Short funding is the opposite of what logic would tell you to do.

It has become blatantly even more obvious that the Governor has no concern about the future of KPERS, or is just TOTALLY ignorant of how the whole thing works. The good news is that there seems to be (for the first time in several years) desire on the newly elected legislature to work positively on these issues. Please keep the pressure up with your communication and 'hold their feet' to the fire!!! As they say, "keep those cards and letters coming in!!"

As of this printing, we do not have a number for the COLA Bill. Hopefully we will by Monday morning!!

A few final thoughts and suggestions on Monday

1. Monday, February 6, 2017, at the State Capitol
2. Set up time 9:00 to 10:00, Rally 10:00 to 11:30

3. Wear Black: "The Black Shirts" are a recognized "brand". We suggest black be worn. We may have to consider presenting "buttons" or some other item that links everyone together. (If your group has t-shirts that identify you, by all means wear them~!!)
4. Be orderly (The security guards are one of us!)
5. Be careful with your behavior, we know some of you are really "fed up," but be polite.
6. A list of goals and talking points needs to be provided to all who attend the Rally.
7. Make seeing your representative and senator a priority, and try to see the Governor, if not available, his chief of staff. This probably won't be possible, but just the "try" will send a message!
8. If you can't hear or see well...This is a PRESENSE Rally. We need people here to be seen.
9. House is typically gavelled in at 11:00
10. Senate at 2:00
11. Rally will be on the 1st floor Rotunda!
12. Parking will be a problem. We will send you info on this!
13. 4 years ago we had 400 +, last year 200 +, because of the weather reschedule! Let's beat that number this year!!!
14. People who can't attend should contact their elected officials on that day using an email address other than their work address.

Directions to a map of Capitol area and other parking information

We have secured a map for parking immediately around the Capitol. Please find it on our website at www.ksretirees.org. Located on website under Latest News; it is the second blue bar down.

We suggest the above as the parking in the immediate area of the Capitol is limited to the Capitol underground parking, which is free, **BUT**, will fill up very early on the 6th. Very limited handicap parking may be available in the Capitol parking garage. Past these two options, metered parking on the streets is about the only other option available, but it is also very limited. We cannot over emphasize the challenge you will face if you aren't bussed or car pooled to the Capitol, and then the drivers "shuttled" to the Capitol from the Expo Center!

Ample parking is available at the Topeka Expo Center at 19th & Topeka Avenue. A shuttle will run from 8:30 am to 1:00 pm from this location. (This shuttle is provided courtesy of the Topeka Fire Fighters.) Typically the vehicle is a minivan which will have a sign on the door indicating that it is provided by the fire fighters union. The driver of this vehicle will be (as it has been for several years), Dennis Wikel. When you enter the huge parking lot, go to the deserted south/east lot away from the hotel parking area.

Who has been invited to speak at the Rally!

Governor Sam Brownback
 State Treasurer Ron Estes (Not Available – out of town)
 Senate President Susan Wagle
 Senate Minority Leader Anthony Hensley – Accepted invitation.
 Speaker Ron Ryckman (Has declined due to schedule conflicts.)
 Representative Jim Ward – House Minority Leader – Accepted invitation.
 Representative Jim Kelly – Financial Institutions and Pension Chair
 Ranking Minority Representative Gail Finney (Deferred to Rep. Trimmer)
 Representative Ed Trimmer – Financial Institutions and Pension Member - Accepted invitation.
 Representative Stephen Johnson - Accepted invitation.
 Chair – Joint Committee on Pensions, Benefits and Investments
 Chair of House Tax Committee
 Senator Jeff Longbine
 Vice President of the Senate
 Chair of Senate Financial Institutions and Insurance
 Vice Chair – Joint Committee on Pensions, Benefits and Investments
 (The invited who have not responded at this writing are not marked.)

Directions on how to find the contact information for your representatives.

To find your Kansas Senator and Representative:

1. Go to www.openstates.org
2. Two options will appear – skip the state query.
3. In the second slot enter your complete address.
4. Hit return and your representatives will appear.

To find the contact information on any Representative or Senator:

1. Go to www.kslegislature.org
2. Click on House.
3. Click on Roster – Representatives are listed in alpha order.
4. Click on your Representative his/her information will appear.
5. If you wish more info on any Rep., scroll to the bottom of the page and click on “Spread Sheet Option.”
6. This report in XL format contains all info on your guy or gal except for their cell phone number!
7. The same process can be followed to find your senator, i.e., Click on Senate, Click on Roster and so on!!

Specific Bill information and bill numbers of interest to KPERS folks.

(As of 3:30 PM Thursday, February 2, 2017)

HB2005 – The so called ‘FHSU Bill’ allows KPERS retirees that go back to work as college instructors to be exempt from the ‘Working After Retirement Restraints.’ This is, therefore, the first of probably several WAR Bills.

HB2111 – My so called ‘Todd Hart Bill.’ Todd is presently on the KPERS Board as a ‘KPERS’ elected trustee. In prepping for his own retirement, he discovered that if a KP&F person died 3 days before retiring, his family would get fewer benefits than if he died 3 days after retiring. Obviously not fair and not intended, original bill wording issue.

SB137 – Looks like a duplicate bill to HB2111.

HB2161 – This bill nearly caused Harv Ludwick to have a stroke when he first read it cold because it does not mention ‘Unclaimed Property Funds’ which is what it refers to. KPERS Staff (because they are so good at investing) invests this money in a separate account from the Trust Fund for the State. This is another fund that the Governor wants to ‘borrow’ from.

SB115 – Looks like a duplicate bill to HB2161.

SB27 and HB2052 are identical bills for implementing the Governor’s original budget proposals for this year.

SB138 – This is a Working after Retirement (WAR) Bill – This is for KPERS licensed school retirees and seeks to lift the earning limits which are now \$25,000 in some cases. (One focus of the WAR bills is to simplify the entire process. In our opinion they presently have a quagmire!!)

HB2266 – Indicates that when an employee covered by KPERS passes away they receive \$4000 burial expense. KP&F believes that if they worked for regular KPERS as well as KP&F, they should be entitled to 2 burial benefits (Total \$8000), because they paid for two, one under each, KPERS and KP&F. This bill states that regardless, the most death benefits that be received is two.

HB2268 – Was introduced so that additional clean up can be done on the WAR statutes. Time has about run out on bill introduction, so this was introduced as sort of a ‘place holder.’ Some more changes will be added, hopefully simplifying the statute in the end.

The Silver Haired Legislature Joins the fight in support of KPERS.

The Kansas Silver Haired Legislature held their 34th Annual Session in Topeka on October 4 - 6, 2016. At this Annual Session, the delegates debate and vote on the issues presented to them by the Executive Board from their July meeting. These issues, in the form of Bills and Resolutions, are subjected to a two-day process of

committee hearings and debate, and then voted on two separate times before being considered as "passed". Those Bills and Resolutions that do survive this process are then sent to the Kansas State Legislature for consideration during the 2016 Legislative session. It is just one way for the Senior Citizens in Kansas to have their collective voice heard.

Here are the Resolutions passed by the full body of the Kansas Silver Haired Legislature at this year's Annual Session:

1) Resolution No. 3301 - Urge the Kansas Legislature and the Governor to fully fund all Kansas Public Employees Retirement System obligations (KPERS), including the interest at 8% on the bonds passed this past legislative session.

2) Resolution No. 3307 - Urge the Legislature and the Governor to provide a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for each retiree who is entitled to receive a retirement benefit from KPERS. This has not happened since 1998.

3) Resolution No. 3302 - Urge the Legislature and the Governor to repeal the non-wage business income tax exemption, passed by the Kansas Legislature and signed by the governor in 2012, and replace it with a tax policy fair to all Kansans, with shared responsibility for contributing by all Kansans.

4) Resolution No. 3303 - Urge the Legislature and the Governor to continue to support and fund public transportation, so vitally needed by our Kansas Senior Citizens, especially in rural areas of our state.

5) Resolution No. 3304 - Urge the Legislature and Governor to restore the 30% cut to the Senior Care Act program, which allows a qualifying senior to stay in their own home with just a minimum of assistance, which averages approximately \$250.00 a month. This is a substantial savings when compared with an alternative of nursing home expenses, which can easily average around \$4000.00 per month.

6) Resolution 3305 - Urge the Legislature and Governor to support the expansion of Medicaid (KanCare) in Kansas. Currently, approximately 150,000 (of which around 16,000 are Kansas seniors between the age of 60 - 65 years old) Kansans fall into the "coverage gap" - they make too much money to qualify for the base Kansas KanCare program, yet not enough to be able to afford medical insurance on their own. The Kansas Hospital Association and the Alliance for a Healthy Kansas are both in full support of this resolution.

The Silver Haired Legislature was created by an act of Congress in 1969, with the Kansas Silver Haired Legislature being formed in 1982. The KSHL is charged with identifying issues important to older Kansas adults 60 years of age and older, of which there are nearly 500,000, and to educate the Kansas Legislature about those issues. Each county is entitled to one representative, with the five largest counties having up to five additional representatives. This coming spring, the SHL delegates from the eleven regions across Kansas will begin meeting once again to decide the issues of importance to Kansas seniors, and preparations will be made for the 35th Annual Session next fall in Topeka. Talk to your county's SHL delegate between now and then so the issues important to you can be considered in this next cycle.

Enjoy the Super Bowl but not so much you can't join us on Monday!!

- Remember to send us your updated email address...also if for any reason you should no longer wish to receive this update, let us know at the address(es) listed at the end of this "update," and we 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 Ron and I editorialize, we 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

Ernie Claudel
eclaudel1@comcast.net
913-481-6923

Ron Gardner
rongardner1811@comcast.net
913-782-8175