



Update

Dear Friends,

July 10, 2024

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 Claude)

Remember:

1. *Nothing gets done unless someone does it. Everyone must do their part.*
2. *When you talk to people about Rally Day, remember, "You are promoting the event and their attendance, you are not just announcing the event!"*

The next meeting of KCPR will be held on Wednesday, August 14, via Zoom.
The 9:00 AM KCPR MEETING WITH BE FOLLOWED AT 9:45 AM by the Lobby Day 2025 Committee Meeting

Please note that this meeting has been changed BACK TO the normal 2nd Wednesday date.

KCPR July 10, 2024, UPDATE

Some of our discussions and actions at today's meeting were as follows:

1. **Please save a date: We are going to make every attempt to schedule the 2025 Lobby Day, Rally Day, or whatever the committee chooses as a name to be scheduled the 2nd week of February. Please make every effort to be present in the Kansas Capitol on that day!! We would like to schedule it on the day when the House Committee meets if possible. This exact day is not known at this time. The three likely dates in February are M, T, W, 10th, 11th, and 12th of 2025. We will request one of these.**
2. **Some of the outcomes of this year's special session of the legislature are provided for your information:**
 - A. The Kansas income tax floor has been raised.
 - B. The Kansas income tax on Social Security Benefits has been removed for all.
 - C. The Kansas (State) part of the tax on food has been removed.
 - a. Some of you will still be paying *loca*/ income tax on food.
 - b. The removal of the food tax at the grocery store is only on food.
3. We reviewed what we know of the upcoming primary elections.
 - A. Be sure you are registered to vote. You will need to vote in the primary as well.
 - B. We have noted that several have a primary opponent. Be sure that you talk to those people and find their position on fixing KPERS. Require promises on their position! One of our steering committee members asked for the promise in writing and received it.
 - C. Here are suggested questions to ask the candidates, as well as those running unopposed.
 - a. Since all of you are getting over a 90% raise in salary.... after 17 years:
 - b. Will you support a permanent increase in KPERS retirement benefits? We are hovering around 30 years now since we had one. The rationale used to cement your upcoming raise which was the rationale that it had been in 2008 (17 years) since there was a legislative pay raise. Don't the retirees after nearly 30 years deserve one?
 - c. If elected, will you refuse to vote for legislative leadership if they will not promise to address this issue?
 - d. Supporting these issues is the only way to secure my vote.

- e. If you hear the excuse that KPERS needs to be 80% funded before a benefit increase can be offered, tell them that that is unrealistic and that we don't have another 30 years to wait for a benefit increase. I won't explain but rest assured that 80% funding is an unrealistic goal anytime soon!

4. Communication

- A. All previously attached information is now available on our website. www.ksretirees.org
- B. Once you know who your legislator is going to be, contact him/her. I do not think every week or two will hurt.
- C. Do not worry about them being too old, find a way around it. - Rod's idea: If you know that there is no way they are going to write their Kansas Representative and Senator, compose a letter at each meeting and have them sign. Then you mail it. BUT do not let the more able-bodied one use an excuse for not writing an email themselves.
- D. Be careful not to suggest anything that they can use as an excuse for doing less. (For example, write post cards rather than attend the Lobby Day.)

5. Be Aware of the following:

- A. There is a 'Majic Number' floating around Topeka. The contention is that KPERS needs to be at 80% funding level before a Benefit Increase can be considered. This is not a realistic funding level! This is not a reasonable funding level! I don't know about you, but I don't have another 30 years to wait for a KPERS Benefit increase.
- B. The actions that have lead to the serious underfunding of KPERS are the responsibility of earlier Kansas Legislatures. The latest is the result of recent legislature. (2012) The legislature established Tier III and is now realizing that it does not provide a reasonable retirement benefit. This adds to the present need for more funding to "fix" Tier III and provide an increase in the retirement benefit for Tier I and II.

C. Personal Thought

- A. It is essential that we elect folks who support a KPERS Benefit increase. Since the legislature is going to receive this large raise, it is essential that we do everything possible to receive a benefit increase because the legislative raise provides us with leverage we have not previously enjoyed!
- B. If you need someone to talk to your group because you would like more information, let me know. KCPR can provide someone to talk to your group.
- C. Since the legislature is getting a sizable raise, ask the candidates if they would consider helping you get one!
- D. "One of the penalties for refusing to participate in politics is that you end up being governed by your inferiors." Plato, quoted in the Philadelphia Daily News.

Have a Wonderful Week!!!!

Ernie Claudel, KCPR & KARSP Lobbyist

eclaudel1@comcast.net

913-481-6923