

Opinion

Letter to the editor: KPERS needs adjustments

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1997 — “Titanic” was the biggest film of the year and “Seinfeld” was the most popular television show. Princess Diana died in a Paris car crash. The price for a gallon of gas averaged \$1.22.

Retired Kansas educators, judges, law enforcement, firefighters and other state government employees received a cost of living adjustment. And they have not received a COLA since.

The Kansas Public Employee Retirement System was established in 1961 for State of Kansas public employees to provide a defined benefit pension plan. The KPERS trust fund balance is derived from three sources: employee contribution, employer (i.e., city, county, and state governments) contribution, and investment returns. Without proper employer contributions, proper investment returns are not possible.

Randy Watson, Kansas commissioner of education, established the Kansas Commissioner of Education’s Blue Ribbon Task Force on Teacher Vacancy and Supply in 2016. The task force’s final report included 61 recommendations to recruit and retain teachers. Only one of the 61 was about KPERS (eliminate the Working after Retirement rules and KPERS penalties).

KARSP advocates for legislation that provides the first COLA in 23 years to recipients of KPERS benefits as follows: a 1% COLA to people retired five to 10 years, a 2% adjustment for those retired 10 to 15 years and a 3% increase for individuals retired more than 15 years.

Please support our retired public servants and elect local and state candidates who support a COLA for KPERS and your retired teachers.

Jerry Henn (executive director of Kansas Association of Retired School Personnel), Topeka