



Update

Dear Friends,

January 31, 2025

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:

*When you talk to people about the **"Pack the Capitol for a COLA Day," February 12th, 2025**, remember, "You are promoting the event and their attendance! You are not just announcing the event!"*

The next KCPR gathering will be on February the 12th as this is our regular scheduled meeting day. See you at "Pack the Capitol for a COLA Day."

KCPR January 30, 2025

This is one day late as of some events that occurred yesterday afternoon and information from the KARSP Executive Board this morning needed to be included here.

1. The following was confirmed yesterday afternoon: THERE WILL BE A COLA BILL. We do not have a bill number currently. The number and bill explanation will be released as soon as it is available. (The rather unusual turn of events was exciting, but too long to explain at this point.) Once the bill number is available, full disclosure of those who helped us with this will be fully credited! It is our understanding that this bill has some actual COLA qualities and will not just be a permanent benefit increase.
2. ALSO: KARSP (Kansas Association of Retired School Personnel) is one of the prime supporters of KCPR. We often refer to KARSP as our sister organization, will offer the following in support of "Pack the Capitol."
 - A. *KARSP is offering to any active KARSP member \$100 to any member who transports 4 members (themselves and 3 others) in a vehicle to the February 12th, 2025, event, "Pack the Capitol for a COLA Day."*
 - B. *[Again, to qualify for this travel reimbursement, the recipient MUST be an active KARSP member!]*
 - C. *Upon arrival at the Capitol on that day, there will be a form available for the driver to fill out for reimbursement and to be given \$100.00 in gas money.*
3. On a serious note: It appears that a reason/excuse you may receive when asking for a COLA is that you know when you signed up for KPERS you knew KPERS did not contain a COLA. While perhaps not as big an exaggeration a Defined Benefit Plans don't have COLAs, it may not be too much of an exaggeration to say the level of misinformation is close!

- A. Anyone who enrolled in KPERS through December 31, 2014, did have reason to expect a COLA for the following reasons:
 - a. There were 16 benefit permanent benefit increases, from 1972 through 1998.
 - b. With the original Tier II, which was in effect from July 1, 2009, through December 31, 2014, did actually include a COLA. (In fact, there are 5 retirees who actually receive a COLA under this plan.)
 - c. As late as the KPERS 2005 Pre-Retirement Brochure suggested that a benefit increase might be forthcoming.
 - d. And finally, the legislators weren't promised a raise when they agreed to run either, as the present raise concept did not exist prior to the 2023 session. One of the rationales used by the committee charged with making the present salary recommendation was that the legislators had not received a raise since 2008, or 13 years. The lack of a benefit increase for the KPERS retired and their beneficiaries has been since 1998, or 27 years.
4. If possible, please plan to attend our event on February the 12th. At the bottom of this doc., we have attached a copy of 'KPERS Day Plans,' the '2025 Talking Points,' and 'Parking and Logistics.' The only minor changes are found in the 1st document and are highlighted in yellow.
 - A. There is a HUGE *new* mural on the first floor East across from the 'Classic, operator run elevator,' championing *Women's Suffrage!* It is awesome!
5. Be sure you watch our FB page and/or regularly check your email for updates as I am sure there will be additional changes. Our FB Page is 'Kansas Coalition of Public Retirees.'

Ernie Claudel, KCPR & KARSP Lobbyist
eclaudel1@comcast.net
913-481-6923

PLANNED ACTIVITY FOR FEBRUARY 12th. "Pack the Capitol for KPERS COLA"

THE GOAL IS TO HAVE AS MANY PEOPLE IN THE CAPITOL TALKING ABOUT THE NEED FOR A COLA AS POSSIBLE. We have a 'staging area' of the Capitol reserved beginning at 8:00 am on the 1st Floor, South.

To ensure that you receive all of the information for this event, go to www.ksretirees.org and sign up to receive the latest KCPR Update. In this way you will receive the latest info in a timely manner. We may well have information regarding committee meeting agendas, etc. up to the last day. Check your email before you leave home for the trip to Topeka to be sure there is not a last-minute update.'

KCPR WILL PROVIDE:

1. A representative to meet you past the entrance and direct you to our assigned space.

2. A packet having:
 - a. Updated KCPR/KARSP Brochure
 - b. KPERS COLA History
 - c. A **'report form'** so we can be made aware of your experiences so we can follow up as well as know what feedback you receive.
 - d. A copy of our latest 'talking points.'

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES, should you choose to attend:

1. Prior to this day, schedule an appointment with your representative, your senator, and any others you know. What hours might be available? (It has been suggested that you start this process directly.)
2. To find your Representative and Senator please use the following method:
 - A. If you do not know or are not sure who your Kansas Senator and Representative is, go to OpenStates.org. It will ask you what you are looking for so enter legislators. It will next ask for your address, and your Senator and Representative will pop up!!
 - B. *SCHEDULE FOR FEBRUARY 12th:*
 - a. Headquarters this year will be on First Floor South.
 - b. Most legislators arrive in the building by 8:00 am.
 - b. The House goes into session at 11:00 am. The session at this time of year will likely not last more than an hour. This however is not a guarantee.
 - c. You then have from 8:00 until 11:00 to schedule with your House Member and perhaps after the session when the day finishes.
 - d. The Senate goes into session at **2:30** pm. The session at this time of year will likely not last more than an hour. This however is not a guarantee.
 - e. You will probably be restricted to 8:00 until 2:00 with the Senate. Arrive not later than 11:00 am providing you have later appointments.
 - C. If others have appointments with your legislator/senator and could not get an appointment and you have one, you can take them with you.
 - D. A KCPR representative will provide you with a sheet of talking points to offer advice if wanted on how to present the information provided.

OTHER INFORMATION:

1. If you are available, and do not have appointments, we offer the following information: The two committees, Senate and House, that are assigned (at least initially) KPERS Bills. They will both

be meeting on February 12th. We need to pack these two meeting rooms – *even if they are not talking about KPERS matters on those days!* These meetings will last an hour.

Committee Rooms and Time

- a. House Financial Institutions and Pensions 582-N 9:00 AM Wednesday
 - b. Senate Committee on Financial Institutions and Insurance 546-S daily 9:30.
2. Presently there is a small deli on the first floor and a nice area to eat across the hall. If we can get as many of you to come that we would like, we may overflow the deli, “Lettuce Feed You.” However, one probably needs to pack a lunch unless you personally prefer to skip lunch. (If the weather permits there are two eating establishments close by.) We want to pack the gallery in both the House at 11:00 and the Senate at 2:30. Weather permitting, in theory you would have time to walk to a place to eat off campus.
 2. Building Tour Information: (You can turn this into a Capitol Day Trip as well.)
 - A. The only entrance to the Capitol is through the North entrance. (You can take any exit to leave, but only one to enter.)
 - B. To the left of the entrance is the Capitol Store which is open 9 am to 5 pm.
 - C. Just past this on the left is the tour guide/information center. You can pick up a brochure there and follow it for a walking tour of the building.
 - a. There is also a guided tour of the building at 9 am, 10 am, 11 am, 1 pm, 2 pm, & 3 pm. You do not need to sign up ahead of time. You are welcome to join a tour at any one of these times. You do not need a reservation!
 - b. Also available are ‘Dome’ tours. These leave the guide station at 9:15 am, 10:15 am, 11:15 am, 1:15 pm, 2:15 pm & 3:15 pm.
 3. You can also examine the House and Senate chambers with no one present as well as see both Chambers in session if you like.
 4. *We cannot predict this early whether there will be committee meetings of interest you might attend. This information will be available as late as the morning of the 12th.*
 5. Unless your group or organization has a designated T-Shirt or other desired apparel, we would ask that you wear black.
 6. Entrance to the ‘galleries’ on both the Senate and the House are from the 4th floor while the entrance to the floors are on the 3rd floor. (If you enter on the third floor you will climb the stairs.)

TALKING POINTS 2025

1. Two Basic Facts
 - A. To work for the KPERS covered positions, the only individuals with an option to take part are the legislators. Everyone else is required to accept KPERS when accepting a job with a KPERS member agency.
 - B. The promise of a KPERS retirement goes along with employment in a KPERS covered position accepted by the employee.
2. *The last permanent KPERS benefit was enacted by the legislature in 1998.* This was a 3% annual base increase. KPERS was created on the premise of ad hoc benefit adjustments approved by the legislature, not the premise there would never be adjustments. This premise was demonstrated by the legislature approving adjustments from inception to the last adjustment made in 1998. *From 1972 to 1998, the legislature approved 16 permanent benefit adjustments averaging an adjustment every 1.6 years.* This is a significant precedent and establishes an expectation for the future.
3. During the entire existence of KPERS, the employees have always contributed the required contribution, and the local KPERS member employers always paid what the legislature directed.
4. Because of underfunding by the legislature, a large UAL occurred.
 - A. When the original Kansas Teachers Retirement System was rolled into KPERS by the legislature (1971), the legislature broke their own requirements by not fully funding it at the time. (Attempts were made to rectify this short funding but were stopped before the fund was made whole.)
 - B. The year 2025 marks only the 7th time that the actuarially calculated amount was contributed by the state legislature. (The actuarial calculated amount or more has been contributed starting in 2020 through the 2025 budget.) Prior to this 'contribution correction' the KPERS Trust Fund had been funded at a 'statutory rate'. This was a percentage determined by the legislature and this pattern of underfunding was carried out for 25 years. [1994-2019 – The 'statutory contribution rate' was determined by K.S.A. 74-4920(8)]
5. Even with these limited improvements in the state contribution, and efforts to make up for the late payments, the fund has not been made whole yet due to the loss of investment income that would have been seen if payments had been made when due.

PACK THE CAPITOL FOR KPERS COLA

1. KPERS COLA Day at the Capitol is scheduled to begin at 8:00 am on Wednesday, February 12, 2025. Our HQ table will be located on the 1st Floor, South this year. Representatives of KCPR and

KARSP will be available in the area with a Sign-In sheet, a one page talking point handout and COLA stickers until 3:00 pm. (This is a reserved 'staging area' with no formal gathering planned.)

2. The full House convenes at 11AM and the full Senate goes into session at 2 PM. Please plan to attend these meetings in masse in the 4th floor galleries to demonstrate to your legislators the urgency of passing a KPERs COLA bill.
3. There is now a circle drive into the Capitol off SW 8th Street, with the only entrance to the building on the north side of the building at ground level meaning there are no more stairs to enter the building!
4. Ample parking is available at the Stormont Vail Event Center at 19th & Topeka Avenue. This lot is on the East Side of the Vail Center. The pick-up point is in the SE portion of the parking lot which will likely have "0" cars prior to our arrival. It is a huge lot. A shuttle fleet will run from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm from this location. (This shuttle is provided courtesy of the Topeka Fire Fighters.) It will be equipped with a sign indicating it is from the firefighters' union. 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 8th. 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 overemphasize the challenge you will face if you are not bussed or carpoled to the Capitol, and then the drivers "shuttled" to the Capitol from the Vail Center provided by **Dennis Weikel**. He keeps track of the cars and the names of the people he takes to the Capitol so that no one is left behind!
5. We suggest that for those carpooling your driver deliver you to the north entrance off the circle drive, then take the carpool vehicle to the shuttle area (see above) and have the shuttle return you to the Capitol. Buses may be parked or wait here also.
6. If you are lucky enough to park on the street, choose the parking meters with the yellow post. They allow for longer parking at a cheaper price. To use these meters, you would need a 'Passport Parking Mobile App.' This is why we suggest using the Vail Center parking lot and the free shuttle provided.
7. The entry, which we have described above, is truly beautiful. You enter the building, and past the security check point is a Visitors Center, and then there are some 30 yards of exhibits as you move toward the elevators. This path will lead you to an office referred to as "The Document Room." To gain access to the elevators, you move straight ahead until you come to a T (The Document Room). Turn right a few steps for the elevator. This elevator will take you to all five floors! You will also find an elevator to your left. There are steps in this area leading to the first floor. You may want to take those if you are able bodied. Our gathering area is on the second floor Rotunda.
8. We suggest you plan to wear black. We will have COLA stickers available to place on your top! While it would be nice to give everyone a free T-shirt, our budget does not allow for this type of expenditure. (If your organization has matching T-shirts which identify you as a group, wear them!!)

9. **The matter of security:** There will be two metal detectors at the entrance. In order to pass through this entrance, it is in everyone's best interest to bring a minimum of items that may set the "alarm" off and require delays for all. It is suggested that you have all items that will "set off the bells" in one container so that all will pass through the scanner at once. Anything metal will set off the machine! Some of the items which are a problem are cell phones, other electric equipment and of course keys. Our friends at security have once again emphasized that no signs or banners are allowed in the Capitol!
10. Finally, you are reminded to bring a snack or a light lunch as the Capitol is not equipped to handle a large lunch crowd. There are fast food and casual sit-down restaurants within walking distance of the Capitol that can be visited in the break between the morning House session and the afternoon Senate session.
- 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.
 - It is very important that you act NOW to request a meeting time with your Legislators (Senate and House) during your time at the Capitol.
 - 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 I want you to forward this to other retirees and the "working" who will benefit from this information. The KCPR website is www.ksretirees.org