



Update

Dear Friends,

June 19, 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)

Two quotes that are applicable to the upcoming challenges:

1. "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
2. *Nothing gets done unless someone does it. Everyone must do their part.*
3. *When you talk to people about the 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, July 10, 2024, 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 June 19, 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 day is not known at this time. The three likely dates are February are M, T, W, 10th, 11th, 12th of 2025. We will request one of these.**
2. Initial discussions on what to propose for a benefit increase in the 2025 session were held. It had been noted that a 13th check would not be a good choice for those who had been retired a long time. Some legislators in the past have thought that a 13th check would be of great benefit to that group. After some thought, we determined that this was not the case. If you have plausible (affordable) ideas, please let us know. We have thought about a two pronged approach, a 1% COLA after you have been retired 5 years plus a base raise to help the folks who have been retired for many years.
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. 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. We are also reaching out to all the groups that have expressed interest in supporting our efforts! Marc and I are going to tackle this one.
 5. The LOBBY DAY COMMITTEE for 2025 held its 2nd meeting today following the adjournment of the KCPR meeting.
 6. I have also attached a chart that was put together by one of the Steering Committee members comparing the Social Security increases since 1997 with the KPERS benefit increases. You might want to print that off and carry it with you when you talk to candidates and legislators. A tremendous graphic illustration!
 7. I want to thank KCPR for voting to ask me to lobby for them again next year.

Legislative Information

I have attached a copy of this year's election candidates for the Kansas House and Senate. Please note the following:

KANSAS SENATORS, Not running again:

- A. Senator Rick Wilborn – Now running for the house because of Mason's death. District 73 – Les Mason recently passed away.
- B. Longbine, Dan Kerschen, McGinn, Tom Holland, John Doll, O'Shea, Olson, Straub and Steffen

KANSAS REPRESENTATIVES, Not running again:

- A. Highberger, Concannon, Younger, Dodson, Garber, Eric Smith, Landwehr, Mike Murphy.
- B. Blew, Titus, Miller, Owens & John Eplee are representatives now running for the Senate.

By my calculations:

- A. 5 Senators have no opponent: 3 R's & 2 D's.
- B. 45 Representatives have no opponent: 27 R's & 18 D's

Three Personal Thoughts

1. If you are involved in a group that has interest that has interest in a COLA (Benefit Increase) improving Tier III, even if it is a 'coffee klatsch' and they would like to get more involved, let me know.
2. If you need someone to talk to your group because you would like more information, let me know.
3. We have not heard this often, but some aren't interested because they don't need a benefit increase. Ask them if they would consider helping you get one!

Have a Wonderful Week!!!!

Ernie Claudel, KCPR & KARSP Lobbyist

eclaudel1@comcast.net

913-481-6923