



# Update

Dear Friends,

Feb 8, 2018

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)

Dear Friends,

The Rally went off without a hitch; however, the weather did impact us greatly. Those in attendance were enthusiastic and visited with their Representatives and Senators. Being in the Capitol and around numerous legislators, it became obvious that not a great deal is happening while they wait on some reports that are due out regarding some studies around education and funding available. There are also questions by all as to what the new Governor will do. The question is how much deviation will there be from Brownback's path. No one we talked to was willing to hazard a guess.

We had 6 speakers for the rally. We had invited more, but these were the ones who arrived and spoke.

The first speaker was Democratic Representative Ed Trimmer. Rep. Trimmer is also a retired teacher. He has and does serve on the House Committees that deal with pensions for a number of years. He thanked Dennis and me for our diligence and hard work in behalf of KPERS retirees. He noted that 'working after retirement' had been positively addressed last year and noted that bills were in the works to move the correction officers to KP&F. He also noted that any COLA would be hard this year, but we must keep fighting for a COLA and keeping the idea alive, because if we don't and the money ever becomes available, we need to be there to be in a position to take advantage of the opportunity.

The second speaker was Senate Democratic Leader Anthony Hensley. He is the longest serving legislator in Kansas. Forty two years total, 16 in the House and 26 in the Senate. He pointed out that during the economic down turn of 2007-2009 there was a deficit of \$600 million. Because of the failed tax plan, he pointed out that in 2016 alone there was a deficit of \$700 million in one year. He thanked all the retirees for their hard work in behalf of Kansans and their children. He indicated that using KPERS as a credit card and taking money from the highway fund needed to stop.

The third speaker was Jim Ward, the Democratic Leader in the House. He has been in the House for 16 years, and it should be noted he is running for Governor. He thanked the retirees for their service to Kansas. He stated that the war on State employees needed to end and State Civil Service needed to be restored. He stated that Governor Brownback left the State with the promise that KPERS would be fully funded. He hopes that that promise will be honored.

Republican Senator Jeff Longbine, Vice President of the Senate, Chair of Senate Financial Institutions and Insurance and Vice Chair Joint Committee on Pensions, Benefits and Investments, noted that the legislature was studying how to fund school finance and be in compliance with the recent Supreme Court Rulings. He also mentioned the overhaul, last year, of the Working after Retirement changes. While indicating the revenue shortage made a COLA difficult at best he did mention the need to annually fund KPERS at the \$600 million plus dollar level.

Republican Representative Jim Kelly – Financial Institutions and Pension Chair did drop by to speak. He indicated the need to fund KPERS, but flatly stated that there was no revenue for a COLA at this time.

Democratic Senator Laura Kelly and Candidate for Governor was our sixth and final legislative speaker of the day. She congratulated us on our great line up of speakers. She stated her concern for the retired and no pay raise (COLA) and indicated that the active state employees were in the same boat. She would like to see the return of support of the public servants. She is for return of Civil Service coverage and indicated that many of the classified civil servants had to choose between a raise and Civil Service coverage during the Brownback Governorship.

Republican Representative Stephen Johnson, Chair of the Joint Committee on Pensions, Benefits and Investments, and Chair of the Taxation Committee, indicated to us last Saturday that he would be unable to attend. This was a disappointment, because he has been one of the members of the legislature who has been most insistent on the full funding of KPERS. While not always in our corner on the subject of a COLA, he has used his considerable influence on numerous occasions to push for maximum funding. This has been no small feat with the ever present revenue short falls of recent years.

The shuttle van ran well into the noon hour shuttling people back to the conference center when they were finished visiting with their legislative representatives. As stated earlier, those in attendance were sincere and persistent!!

You will find the two Rally handouts on the website listed below in the near future!

### **Stay WARM!**

- 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 listed at the end of this "update," and I 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 I editorialize, I 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](http://www.ksretirees.org)

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