

WE...too

Washington Education
Association – Retired

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Legislature: A changing scene

Gov. Gregoire proposes pension reductions for educators

From WEA website ([www.washingtonea.org/Recent News](http://www.washingtonea.org/Recent%20News) 22Jan2011)

Facing a huge budget deficit, Gov. Chris Gregoire has proposed reducing state pension contributions for higher education employees and eliminating the annual automatic pension adjustment for educators in retirement Plan 1. Gregoire also proposed eliminating early retirement options for educators. WEA opposes all three proposals, which would reduce pension benefits for tens of thousands of WEA members.

Gregoire released her complete budget proposal (in December) just days after the Legislature voted to cut \$311 million in K-12 and higher ed funding.

Read Gregoire's overview of pension cuts. (http://www.governor.wa.gov/priorities/budget/pension_reform.pdf)

In a special session Dec. 11, legislators cut funding for smaller K-4 class sizes. With at least a \$4.6 billion budget shortfall because of the recession, it's likely elected leaders will propose additional cuts in areas such as educator salaries, health benefits, all-day kindergarten and levy equalization funding that pays for teachers and support staff. All public education funding is at risk — potentially hundreds of millions of dollars.

WEA members already have suffered more than \$2 billion in state budget cuts over the last couple of years, including the suspension of voter-approved cost-of-living increases, the suspension of I-728 funding for smaller class sizes and the elimination of three learning improvement days, a salary cut of nearly 2 percent. The state also has cut funding for nearly 3,700 full-time K-12 education jobs — in addition to the funding for another 1,500 jobs eliminated on Saturday.

E-mail Gov. Gregoire and your legislators and let them

know what you think about the prospect of additional cuts to education.

Subject: House of Representatives Supplemental Budget

by Randy Parr, Budget Analyst-Lobbyist; Olympia Public Policy Center

rparr@washingtonea.org

Tuesday, Jan. 18, 2011

The House of Representatives released (another) "early action" Supplemental Budget proposal Jan. 18 to address the current year budget deficit. You will remember that in December the Legislature held a special session to address the \$1.2 billion shortfall in the current year accounts and resolved about half (\$588 million) of their problem. The Legislature needs to address the remainder of that shortfall and today's proposal addresses another \$340 million in proposed reduced spending.

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President's Message

Happy New Year! Goodbye 2010. Hello 2011.

This is probably not news to you, but 2010 was not a good year for public pensions. In our state we had some good news in our gain-sharing lawsuit as Judge Eadie ruled in September that the Legislature has no ability to reserve the right to take away a pension benefit that is included in pension legislation. As of the third week in January, his final judgment has yet to be signed, thus "the clock" has not started for the state to make their decision on whether to appeal Judge Eadie's decision. Stay tuned.

That was it for good news around pensions.



Kit Raney, WEA-Retired president

As states were dealing with huge budget deficits, public pensions were under attack. In 2010, twenty states made some sort of change in their pension system. Major changes were made to benefits, vesting requirements,

service and age requirements, calculations in Average Final Compensation (the compensation amount on which your pension is based), and employee contributions. States also changed plans from Defined Benefit to Defined Contribution or a combined plan, similar to the change our state made in 1977. Three states passed laws reducing COLA's to current public employee retiree's.

There also seems to be a change in the tone of articles about pensions with an emphasis on public employees being a "privileged class" for having such "lavish" and "unsustainable" pensions. They seldom mention that, when prop-

erly funded, 75 percent of pension benefit pay-offs are funded by investment earnings. In fact, public pensions are probably the only thing that can be purchased by the state at 25 percent of cost. As states continue to deal with budget shortfalls, public pensions will continue to be a target.

In our state, there has been an increased focus on the unfunded liability for Plan 1. Lee Ann Prielipp wrote a detailed article about this in the [Nov/Dec](#) issue of *WE...too*. The unfunded liability is a huge problem that needs to be addressed by the Legislature but will be difficult in the current economic climate. Even though a large part of this unfunded liability is a result of the state not contributing 100% of what was required to fully fund the plans, this is being used by the governor as an excuse to recommend changes to our pension systems. (And remember, Plan 1 *members* contributed 6% of their salary even when the State did not make their required contribution.) In the governor's proposed budget, she would end the Uniform COLA increases and, for all new hires in Plans 2 and 3, eliminate the alternate early retirement options. In regards to Higher Ed, she is proposing restrictions on Retire-Rehire opportunities and a cap of 6% on state contribution to retirement plans

This will be a difficult Legislative Session and we all need to be informed and involved. Watch for *elerts* from me, and visit www.OurVoiceWashingtonEA.org for news and information about contacting your legislators. Our pensions are a contract with the state and we need to be prepared to defend that contract. And remember, we are part of the 82,000-member WEA and our actions *can* make a difference.

The WEA-Retired Legislative Work Team has scheduled a Lobby Day in Olympia for Wednesday, Feb. 23, and we invite you to join us. If you are interested, please e-mail me at WEARetired@WashingtonEA.org or call 1-800-622-3393x7067 and I will give you additional information.

Nominations

Elections of WEA-Retired officer, board directors, and annual meeting delegates

WEA-Retired will convene an Annual Meeting, June 8-9, 2011. This year delegates will elect a secretary as well as board directors from Sammamish, Soundview, Summit, WEA Eastern Washington, WEA Lower Columbia, and WEA Southeast (all non-chapters).

This form is for nominating non-chapter delegates, non-chapter board directors, and secretary. Fifty words or less biography for each nominee is optional. Non-chapter delegates will be elected at the March 3, 2011, WEA-Retired Board of Directors meeting. Non-chapter board directors and secretary will be elected at the annual meeting in June.

Non-chapter units are: WEA-Cascade (3), WEA-EasternWashington (4), Kent (1), WEA-Lower Columbia (3), WEA MidState (5), North Central (1), WEA Olympic (6), Rainier (2), WEA-Riverside (3), Sammamish (8), Soundview (1), WEA-Southeast (5), Spokane (2), Summit (1), and Vancouver (3). The number in parenthesis is the number of delegates the chapter is allowed in addition to the board director.

All nominees must be WEA-Retired members. More than one name can be submitted to be a non-chapter delegate. You can nominate yourself or another retired member. If you nominate someone other than yourself, you must have the consent of the nominee.

 **Mail the nomination form to: Jan Curtis, 718 Russell Road, Snohomish, WA 98290-5617. Nomination forms must be postmarked no later than February 25, 2011.**

2011 WEA-Retired Annual Meeting Nomination Form— Multiple Positions

Your Name _____ Date of Retirement _____

Your E-mail _____ Phone Number _____

I nominate the following retired members for:

Non-chapter delegate:

Non-chapter WEA-Retired Board Director:

Name

Name

UniServ Council

UniServ Council

WEA-Retired Secretary:

Name

Chapter units are: WEA Chinook (11), WEA Fourth Corner (7), Pilchuck (5), Puget Sound (5), Seattle (5), and Tacoma (3). The numbers in parenthesis is the number of delegates the chapter is allowed in addition to the board director. WEA Chinook, WEA Fourth Corner, Seattle and Tacoma will elect board directors for the 2011-13 term. Chapter units should elect their delegates before March 3, 2011.

Pre-Retirement Seminars

WEA-Retired offers pre-retirement seminars

From WEA website: www.washingtonea.org/retired (WEA-Retired Home Page)

WEA-Retired has a corps of 19 members who are trained to lead pre-retirement seminars. The seminars provide information on all of the retirement plans from the Department of Retirement Systems and hints for making the decisions they require. They also cover financial planning, medical insurance, estate planning, social security, Medicare, and life after retirement. The number of participants in each seminar is limited to give the opportunity for individual questions and discussion.

Seminars are offered throughout the state at the request of locals and UniServ councils. For further information please contact Linda Mortland (Lindacoll@aol.com) or Jean Savidge (jeansavidge@yahoo.com).

Seminar topics include:

- Financial planning with a financial planner
- Estate planning with an attorney
- Social Security and Medicare
- Insurance plans available under Public Employees Benefits Board
- Washington State Teachers and Public Employees Retirement System
- The Third Age? Retirement

There is a sliding fee scale depending on financial support from the sponsoring local or council. Costs include: materials, snacks, meals, and presenters' travel expenses. Pre-retired members of WEA-Retired receive a discount. Additional dates for 2010-2011 will be announced as they are scheduled. Here's a look at upcoming seminars:

- ◆ Feb. 11-12, WEA-Sammamish – Contact Charlotte Cole, ccole@washingtonea.org 425-440-6161
- ◆ Feb. 11-12, Edmonds EA – Contact Andi Nofziger-Meadows, eea@isomedia.com 425-774-8851
- ◆ Feb. 11-12, Spokane EA / WEA-Eastern Washington
Spokane EA members contact Doris Guelich, dguelich@washingtonea.org 509-325-4503
WEA-Eastern Washington members contact Kathy Garger, kgarger@washingtonea.org 509-326-4046
- ◆ Feb. 25-26, Pilchuck UniServ – Contact Jan Curtis, jc_curtis@comcast.net 425-334-2640
- ◆ Feb. 25-26, Tacoma EA – Contact Marian Griffith, 253-759-3032
- ◆ March 4-5, Summit UniServ – Contact Shawn Packard, spackard@washingtonea.org 253-845-4535
- ◆ March 4-5, WEA-Sammamish – Contact Charlotte Cole, ccole@washingtonea.org 425-440-6161
- ◆ March 4-5, Rainier UniServ – Contact Lori Fleck, lfleck@washingtonea.org 206-246-4006
- ◆ March 4-5, WEA Chinook (tentative) – Contact Bev Wentz, rnbwentz@earthlink.net 360-426-1078

(continued on next page)

WEA-Retired pre-retirement seminars, continued

- ◆ March 11-12, Pilchuck UniServ – Contact Jan Curtis, jc_curtis@comcast.net 425-334-2640
- ◆ March 11-12, Clarkston EA – Contact Karle Warren, karlewarren@cableone.net 509-780-1989
- ◆ March 11-12, WEA-Lower Columbia – Contact Shari Boyd, sboyd@washingtonea.org 360-425-8900 or 888-297-8276
- ◆ March 18-19, Vancouver EA – Contact Bonnie Larson, blarson@washingtonea.org 360-695-3397
- ◆ March 18-19, Northshore EA – Contact Lydia King, lking@washingtonea.org 425-486-7101, ext. 111
- ◆ March 18-19, WEA Fourth Corner – Contact Jennifer Wolf, jwolf@washingtonea.org 360-733-3344, ext. 222
- ◆ March 25-26, WEA-Riverside – Contact Jan Crockett, jcrockett@washingtonea.org 360-256-0880
- ◆ March 25-26, Northshore EA – Contact Lydia King, lking@washingtonea.org 425-486-7101, ext. 111
- ◆ March 25-26, WEA Fourth Corner – Contact Jennifer Wolf, jwolf@washingtonea.org 360-733-3344, ext. 222
- ◆ April 8-9, WEA MidState – Contact Sandy Kalmin-Duerre, skalmin-duerre@washingtonea.org 509-452-6559
- ◆ April 15-16, Kent EA – Contact Alice Hren, ahren@washingtonea.org 253-852-1350
- ◆ April 15-16, Spokane EA/WEA-Eastern Washington
Spokane EA members contact Doris Guelich, dguelich@washingtonea.org 509-325-4503
WEA-Eastern Washington members contact Kathy Garger, kgarger@washingtonea.org 509-326-4046
- ◆ April 29-30, Soundview UniServ – Contact Jo Benedetti, jbenedetti@washingtonea.org 253-582-1822
- ◆ April 29-30, WEA Chinook (tentative) – Contact Bev Wentz, rnbwentz@earthlink.net 360-426-1078
- ◆ May 20-21, WEA-Sammamish – Contact Charlotte Cole, ccole@washingtonea.org 425-440-6161
- ◆ May 20-21, Pilchuck UniServ – Contact Jan Curtis, jc_curtis@comcast.net 425-334-2640
- ◆ June 22-23, Pilchuck UniServ – Contact Jan Curtis, jc_curtis@comcast.net 425-334-2640

Have you updated your e-mail with WEA yet? Please see details in the President's Message in the Nov/Dec 2010 issue of *We...Too*. You can find it, along with lots of other great information, on our website: www.washingtonea.org/retired

Member Activities

Who do you think you are?

by Nancy M. Miller
Editor, WEA . . . Too

You may have been fascinated by two recent TV series, "Faces of America" on PBS, or "Who do you Think you Are?" on BBC and NBC. (Enough of us were that WDYTYR is coming back for a second season.) Or you have been cleaning out Grandma's attic. Or maybe you've always been interested in your family and its history, but retirement is the first time you seem to have time to do anything about it.

What should you do to start a genealogical hobby, or become the family historian?

Starting is easiest: grab a pad of paper. You are going to do a brain dump. Use one page for each couple; why will become evident as we go along. (Some of you may prefer to use a separate sheet for each individual.)

OK. Mom and Dad first. Write their names at the top of a page. Don't forget to put down Mom's maiden name. You'll need a column of space below each individual for their personal information. When were they born – day, month and year? When did they die, and were buried? Now: where? Put down country, state, and city – *and county* (because that's generally where the records are kept). Sometimes there are second or third spouses; list them too, and any children from these unions. Note if any of the

kids were adopted. Who were your parents' parents?

Next step, centered below the parents' information, list all the kids (you're in this list), their birth dates and places. Name the spouse, if they married. (Name them all, if they did this a lot!) If you know any other information (years of moves from place to place, addresses, dates of military service, religious affiliation and so on) make notes in the space at the bottom of the page.

Take two new pieces of paper for Grandma and Grandpa's names, dates, and locations, just like you did for Mom and Dad. List their kids (this should include one of your parents). Do this for each couple. Likely you're starting to find gaps in your information. Who knew that you'd want to know "Gee-ma"'s birth place?

Take four new pieces of paper; create family group sheets (this is what you are doing) for the parents of each of your grandparents (your great grandparents). Then do this for their parents. Go as far back as you can in each lineage. The number of sheets of paper that you will need will double with each generation. If you're like most of us, by the second or third generation back, you'll be finding significant gaps in what you know.

Now go back to your grandparents' pages. Listed there are all your aunts and uncles. For those still living,

record their telephone numbers and addresses. Contact each of them and explain your project. They may remember information that you don't. Create family group sheets for your aunts and uncles; your cousins will be listed.

You will find that not all of your informants agree about the "facts." Record everything you are told, and who told it to you, even if it disagrees with something else you have been told. You can resolve these differences later, but often you can't get the stories of the old folks, if you spend time now trying to correct details. You are recording *their* stories, and what *they* remember. You'll have a chance to write your story, too.

Create family group sheets for each of your siblings, then for your cousins. Remember: family trees not only have roots, they have branches!

Part of family history is the opportunity for the family to remain in contact with one another to preserve family stories for generations as yet to come. You may find a great aunt or a second cousin who is already interested in genealogy, and who can give your research a big boost with what s/he has already found out. (Always offer to share what you know; it'll take the effort of lots of folks to complete your family tree.)

But right now, go pick up that pad of paper and start writing.

View from Federal Way

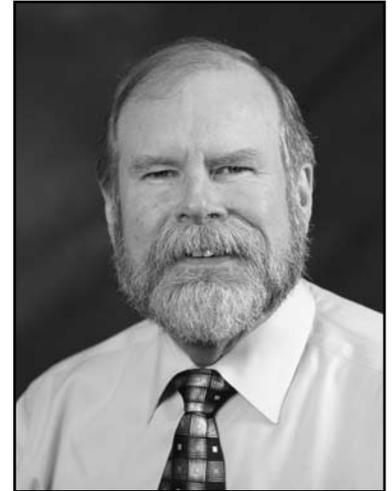
by Mike Ragan, WEA Vice President

Retirement is supposed to be the time of your life when you can relax and enjoy the fruits of your labor. The pace of your life is controlled by you, because your income is composed of the part of your salary which you pooled with your fellow workers in order to provide you with an income for the rest of your life.

It was difficult to compose my thoughts about retirement issues this month. The economy is still in bad shape, the state is not receiving enough revenue to meet its needs, and last November, the voters turned down initiatives which would have produced more revenue. As a result, the governor and the legislature are planning on eliminating a massive budget shortfall primarily through cuts. One of the proposed cuts involves the annual adjustment for retirees on Plan 1.

Last January, I told you that the state actuary was spreading gloom and doom about the under-

funding of Plan 1. I was confused as to his reasoning until I attended the NEA Pension Forum and found out about the attacks on public pensions and public employee unions, which are occurring all across the country. Expect these attacks to continue. We must be alert and active in order to protect the pensions we have earned. For the best and latest information on the excitement in Olympia, visit Our Voice, at www.ourvoicewashingtonnea.org. And don't forget to share your voice with your legislator using the easy links.



Mike Ragan, WEA Vice President

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Website: www.washingtonnea.org/retired or www.washingtonnea.org and pull down "Membership" tab

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E-mail WEA-Retired President Kit Raney: WEARetired@washingtonnea.org

House supplemental budget

(continued from page 1)

For K-12 education, the items for further reduction in K-12 are:

- ◆ Retroactive elimination of K-4 class size enhancement (\$42 million)
- ◆ Retroactive elimination of the Highly Capable program (\$7.1 million)
- ◆ Reduction in Food Service funding (\$3 million)
- ◆ Eliminate Summer vocational skill center programs (\$1.8 million)
- ◆ Schools for Blind and Hearing Loss (\$1 million)
- ◆ Other OSPI programs (\$4 million)

The proposal includes an additional \$5 million as a contingency fund for loans to school districts threatened by insolvency due to the dra-

matic nature of the cuts. And as a note of a small victory, the Governor had also proposed a reduction in levy equalization payments that was not included in the House proposal.

The Governor's office has suggested that the legislature needs to act by February 4, in order to have enough time to effectively implement the needed cuts. However, the Senate does not appear to be operating with the same sense of urgency as is the House or as requested by the Governor.

As always, should you have additional questions I will do my best to get you timely responses. Please note that this is just the first of several budget proposals we will face and is likely subject to change by the Legislature.



WEA-Retired Newsletter
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“The way to secure liberty is to place it in the people’s hands, that is, to give them the power at all times to defend it in the legislature and in the courts of justice.”

— John Adams
1735-1826
America’s second U.S.
President (1797-1801)

Nomination form included
Postmark deadline: Feb. 25, 2011

