
From: Linda Nelsen <linda.nelsen@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, October 14, 2022 11:55 AM
To: Office State Actuary, WA
Subject: Permanent Cost of Living Increase for Plan 1 Pensioners

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October 14, 2022

The Honorable Steve Conway
Chair Select Committee on Pension Policy
P.O. Box 40429
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Chair Conway:

I am writing to thank you and the members of the Select Committee on Pension Policy (SCC) for your consideration of both a legislative pathway to a permanent cost of living adjustment (COLA) for Plan 1 retirees, as well as a one-time three percent COLA effective in July 2023.

Your consideration of these priorities will resolve two immediate issues plaguing our oldest retired public servants. First, by inserting language in SPP-sponsored legislation that will codify a trigger point by which the state will restore a permanent COLA for Plan 1 retirees will solve the long-standing inequity among the pension plans. Plan 1 retirees have waited nearly 12 years for a permanent COLA. Moreover, your consideration of another one-time three percent COLA for Plan 1 retirees will provide much-needed inflationary relief. I deeply appreciate the one-time COLA you secured for Plan 1 retirees like me in the last legislative session. The COLA was helpful and provided temporary relief, as will the proposal you are currently considering. However, one-time COLAs, while deeply appreciated, are short term fixes that never address the real problem: year-after-year the oldest retirees, who historically receive the lowest pensions, continue to lose purchasing power at a time when they need it most.

I hope that you and the Committee can appreciate the inequity of allowing the Plan 2 retirees a permanent COLA while denying the same to Plan 1 retirees. We went to work in an era where discrimination was tolerated and we were historically paid unequally based on gender and racial profiles. We were treated unfairly based on who we were, not on our skills or contributions of loyal public service. Please take this opportunity to right a wrong and allow the eldest of pensioners to level up and finally be treated fairly. Restore what was promised to us! Continued economic discrimination should not be tolerated in this era.

Additionally please consider that any increase in a PERS 1 pensions will be used to pay for the cost increases in utilities, taxes and food which in turn will contribute to the economic health of Washington State, the pensioner and local communities.

Only a permanent COLA will help to ensure financial, food, and housing security in retirement. I hope we can count on you to include, in the bill under development, language to codify a permanent Plan 1 COLA and a one-time three percent COLA for 2023.

Sincerely,

Linda Crane Nelsen
3618 W Fulton St.
Seattle, WA 98199

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