
From: Bill Hebner <billhebner@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 3:15 PM
To: Office State Actuary, WA
Cc: Muzzall, Sen. Ron; Paul, Rep. Dave; Gilday, Rep. Greg
Subject: Permanent COLA for PERS 1 plan members

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Dear Chair and members of the Committee:

I am a retired WA state employee having 28 years of satisfying and loyal service with the Department of Fish and Wildlife. I still live in WA and currently reside in the 10th Legislative District. I am a member of the PERS 1 retirement plan and have been receiving a modest state pension since retiring in 2012. As you know, other than a small COLA (\$60.00 per month) generously provided by the Legislature a year ago and only once since I retired, the purchasing power of my pension has diminished substantially. I am writing to encourage your committee to support a permanent COLA (similar to PERS 2 plan members) for all PERS 1 members and to forward such a proposal for full consideration and adoption by the full Legislature.

Although others encouraged me to pursue a career in private industry many years ago, I chose to work in the public sector for a lower wage for many reasons but certainly in part because of the benefit package offered to public employees. Recognizing inflation could have a devastating effect on retired employees in the PERS 1 plan in terms of the purchasing power of retirees on a fixed income, the Legislature had established a permanent COLA for PERS 1 plan members. That all changed during the recession in 2009 when the state was saddled with a major budget shortfall. In an effort to balance the budget, then Governor Gregoire eliminated the permanent COLA for Plan 1 members promising

that the Legislature would likely reinstate it when state cash flows improved. That time has come, actually action to reinstate the permanent COLA for Plan 1 members is overdue and it is doubly more critical now than in previous years due to the high rate of inflation. Thank you for your hard work and for your consideration in this matter as you please support legislation to reinstate a permanent COLA increase for PERS 1 members. I think you would all agree, it's the right thing to do and it's the right time to do it.

Bill Hebner
Arlington, WA

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