

From: [Jim Davison](#)
To: [Boehnke, Sen. Matt](#); [Fitzgibbon, Rep. Joe](#); [Conway, Sen. Steve](#); [MacEwen, Sen. Drew](#); [Macri, Rep. Nicole](#); [Robinson, Sen. June](#); [Stokesbary, Rep. Drew](#); [Corry, Rep. Chris](#); [Creekpaum, Annette](#); [Murietta, Anthony](#)
Cc: [Office State Actuary, WA](#)
Subject: TRS 1 benefits compared to "survival budget" needed
Date: Sunday, June 8, 2025 10:30:43 AM

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Dear Chair Boehnke and Committee Members,

According to information presented by Senior Policy Analyst Melinda Aslakson at the May 21, 2024 meeting of the Select Committee on Pension Policy (SCPP), the average age of the 28,556 Teacher Retirement System 1 (TRS 1) annuitants (retirees) was 80. Their average years of service was 27 and the average pension was \$29,700 (\$2,475/mo.). Here's a link to Ms. Aslakson's report:
<https://app.leg.wa.gov/committeeschedules/Home/Document/273713#toolbar=0&navpanes=0>

Ms. Aslakson's presentation (specifically the graphs on pages 7-9, slides 12-16) provides great visuals. (I found it interesting that TRS 1 members still employed are earning twice my 2004-5 ending salary.) The slides show how many TRS 1 retirees are receiving which type of pension (slide 13) (regular, Basic Minimum or Alternate Minimum), how many are receiving how much annual benefit (slide 14), years of service (slide 15) and years retired (slide 16).

Now compare Slide 14 with "survival budget" as defined in a recent Seattle Times article (<https://www.seattletimes.com/business/wa-households-cant-afford-basics-even-if-theyre-not-poor-report-says/>). The article stated ". . . a single adult in Washington under 65 would have needed to earn \$32,436 before taxes in 2023 to afford a survival budget." Remember, ALL TRS 1 and PERS 1 retirees are OVER 65 because those plans closed in 1977.

The CPI Inflation Calculator shows what cost \$100 in 2005, when I retired, now costs \$164.93. That's nearly a 65 percent loss of purchasing power since my retirement! That's my reason for contacting legislators for more than a decade requesting that our oldest school retirees be a legislative spending priority—especially after underfunding TRS 1 and PERS 1 from 2001-10, resulting in the UAAL. Legislators have responded 5 times since 2018, with one-time capped COLAs. It was 13 years after my retirement before ANY inflation relief was provided. I never benefited from the UCOLA which ended in 2011, but ALL other DRS plans CONSISTENTLY received annual COLAs.

Something else to consider: at this spring's annual Washington State School Retirees' Association (WSSRA) conference, 440 members who died in the past year were honored. The majority of those deaths also likely reduced the TRS 1 UAAL. While waiting for legislative action to provide equity with other DRS plans, we continue to age—and die. All while other DRS plans, most of which are predominantly male, continue to receive an annual COLA.

Respectfully,

Jim Davison, TRS 1 since 2005
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