SAN BERNARDINO CONNECT
Retired Public Employees’ Association
Chapter 33 – Area VI
May – June 2017
Volume 7 – Issue 2

RPEA OPPOSES MOORLACH PROPOSED LEGISLATION

Senator Moorlach (R-Orange County) has proposed two resolutions that would change the California Constitution, and they sound a lot like the Reed-DeMaio initiatives we opposed last year. SCA8 would allow a public agency to reduce pension benefits “for work not yet performed.” This would end the defined benefit plan now in effect where workers know their pensions cannot be cut during their working tenure. SCA10, his other proposed constitutional amendment, would require that any increase in public employee benefits would be effective only upon a 2/3 vote of the people in the jurisdiction. How this would affect agency and employee negotiations is obvious. A third Moorlach bill, SB32, would add onto the Public Employees Pension Reforms Act of 2013 (PEPRA) that primarily impacted new hires. RPEA believes all three will suffer defeat just as the Reed-DeMaio proposed initiatives did!

A WARM WELCOME AWAITS YOU!
YOU’RE INVITED TO ATTEND OUR JUNE LUNCHEON!

When? Tuesday, June 13, 2017  11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Where? Fellowship Hall of the First Presbyterian Church
1900 North “D” Street, San Bernardino

The menu: Cheese Enchiladas, Chicken Enchiladas, Rice, Beans, Green Salad, Cake with Strawberries [Catered by An Affair to Remember]

Reservations are required by Tuesday, June 6. Phone June at (909) 583-1082, Gloria at (909) 810-8735 or Linda at (951) 784-1060. Or email lindaandwes@aol.com. Be sure to give us the name (with correct spelling) and phone number for each person who will attend.

Catered luncheon costs: Member, spouse or a caregiver (if needed): $4 per person
Non-member: First time free; second time $4; thereafter $8
(By the third time you attend, we hope you’ll have joined RPEA!)

Program: “San Bernardino County Health Update”
Our guest speaker will be Jasmine Winn, Health Education Specialist with the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health. What are the current concerns for this county? What is being done or should be done in regard to prevention? Are there specific issues relevant to seniors? This covers a broad range of topics, including the flu, adult vaccines, mosquito-borne illnesses, STDs, HIV and more. Bring your questions and get the latest information.

You are welcome to bring a guest—someone who might be interested in joining RPEA.
Membership information will be available at the Welcome Table.
As always, there will be friendly conversation and door prizes!

We are California public employees working together to maintain and improve the quality of our members’ lives by protecting and improving our retirement and medical benefits. RPEA members include retirees, beneficiaries, currently-employed public employees, friends, family members, and others who share our goals. Everyone is welcome!
WE’RE WELCOMING 18 NEW MEMBERS!

Muriel Beeman Apple Valley
Flor Bithorn Victorville
Robert Bithorn Victorville
Ella Dean Barstow
Marvin Dean Barstow
Janet Dole Apple Valley
Denice Eales Redlands
Elma Kenefsky Washington
Jennifer Klinger Lucerne Valley
Linda McGuyer Hesperia
Arthur Peterson Rialto
Janice Peterson Rialto
Kathlyn Pollard Patton
Joan Robertson Claremont
Ignacia Timke Bloomington
John Wood Highland
John Wooten Rialto
Linda Wooten Rialto

THANKS TO ALL WHO DONATED EYE GLASSES! We collected 34 pairs at our February meeting! This project we began 5 years ago is bringing the gift of better vision to people in third world countries.

RPEA TRACKS LEGISLATION
In 2017, the California Legislature introduced a total of 2,545 bills and 24 proposed Constitutional Amendments. The RPEA State Legislative Committee is currently following eleven bills, 5 we support and 6 we oppose. The most recent Tracking Chart is in the current State RPEA Newsletter. Contact us if you want a copy.

There are three levels of support: S1 is the highest priority support with a letter sent to the bill’s author, lobbying and testifying before committee; S2 is moderate support with a letter to the author, usually less lobbying; and S3 the lowest level of support but also with a letter sent to the author. We monitor all amendments, constantly reevaluating positions.

We also have a position of Opposition (O) which is called for on bills judged to be detrimental. There is aggressive opposition lobbying, often accompanied by efforts to gain amendments to make the bill acceptable.

The Watch position has two levels: W1 is actively monitored and involves communication with the author/committee members/staff. We frequently seek clarifying amendments. W2 bills appear in our lobbyist’s summary report which goes to the RPEA State Board.

Jim Anderson
RPEA State Director of Legislation

CHAPTER ELECTION SCHEDULED FOR JUNE
Our Chapter 33 election and induction of officers will take place at the June meeting. The nominating committee has nominated the following members, and additional nominations may be made prior to voting:

President Susan Nelson
Vice President Bob Wengen
Secretary Patsy Hollis
Treasurer Conrad Guzkowski

We continue to be grateful to all those who “do their part” to make our chapter so successful!

In Memory.....
Jon Benfield Banning
Aurora Rossetti Highland
William Slout Redlands

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CHAPTER 33 BOARD MEMBERS’ CONTACT INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
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<td>Conrad Guzkowski, Treasurer</td>
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AREA VI DIRECTOR
Wes Stonebreaker 951-784-1060 lindaandwes@aol.com
PENSION DEBT: COVINA, WEST COVINA, GLENDORA AND AZUSA

In 1976, these four San Gabriel Valley cities formed a job-training agency called LA Works. That agency, a joint powers authority, was disbanded. (They lost their funding because, among other problems, an audit revealed LA Works had overbilled LA County by nearly one million dollars.)

Here’s the problem: The East San Gabriel Valley Human Services Consortium, doing business as LA Works, has not made a monthly payment to CalPERS since June 2015 and needs to pay down a debt totaling $3.37 million. A termination payment would be $19.4 million. The four cities contend that only the disbanded joint powers authority is liable for the pension debt. CalPERS contends the cities are obligated since “They’re the folks who put this thing together, and it’s their employees essentially.”

CalPERS has now made the painful decision to reduce the pensions of nearly 200 former employees as a “last resort.” The mayor of Covina and chairman of the LA Works board states it would be illegal for the cities to use city funds to bail out the pensions. He believes that CalPERS should use their Terminated Agency Fund to cover it. CalPERS, however, says they will not use the fund for this purpose because then they would not be allowed to continue their pursuit of LA Works for money owed to the pension fund.

Editor’s comment: Remember, it is the government agency who negotiates the amount of employee pension benefits—a vested right employees count on—and it is the agency that enters into a contract with each employee. CalPERS is simply the entity that invests and manages money on behalf of agencies; and it is CalPERS who has the fiduciary and legal responsibility to do what is best for all CalPERS retirees and for the health of the system as a whole. This means CalPERS must require agencies to pay what is needed to meet its pension obligations. Sometimes people mistakenly believe that CalPERS is the “bad guy” in cases like this; when, in fact, it is not CalPERS that sets pension amounts or signs the contract for a specific pension or health benefits package.

UPDATE: MARIN COUNTY. No decision yet from the California Supreme Court which is weighing an appeal of the two cases in which judges opined that pensions can be reduced, that a public employee is entitled only to a “reasonable” pension. This obviously threatens the “California Rule” and vested rights.

UPDATE: LOYALTON, CA. When the city left the CalPERS System and failed to pay their termination liability payment owed to the pension fund, CalPERS cut pension payments (beginning in January 2017) by about 60% to the five retired City of Loyalton public employees. A city spokeswoman has confirmed that the city, on a month-by-month basis, is now making up the monetary difference in payment to those retirees.

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATIVE BILLS WORTH KEEPING AN EYE ON:

AB44 would expedite medical review and Workers’ Compensation appeals processes in disputes regarding treatment and would apply retroactively to employees and first responders in the 2015 San Bernardino terrorist attack. AB1311 would revise the composition of the CalPERS Board to add two persons, appointed by the Governor, who represent the public, have financial expertise, and are not interested in the CalPERS system. SB681 would allow a public agency to terminate its contract with CalPERS in a way that does not result in excessive costs/penalties to the agency; to be able to withdraw paid-in assets with the same rate of return; and to remain responsible for any unfunded liabilities.
CHAPTER 33 LUNCHEON MEETINGS
SAVE THESE 2017 DATES!

June 13
September 12
December 12

Membership applications are available at luncheons, online at rpea.com, or by phoning June Copple (Membership Chair) at 909-583-1082 to have an application mailed to you.

You may be someone who cannot attend luncheon meetings; but by joining RPEA, you will stay informed and support our efforts on your behalf. The more members we have, the greater our influence!

Want to know more about RPEA? Request an information packet by phoning Wes at 951-784-1060 or emailing lindaandwes@aol.com.

STRESS REDUCTION

A psychology professor walked around on a stage while teaching stress management principles to a classroom of students. As she raised a glass of water, everyone expected they’d be asked the typical “glass half empty or half full” question. Instead, with a smile on her face, she asked, “How heavy is this glass of water I’m holding?” Students shouted out a range of answers.

She replied, “From my perspective, the absolute weight of this glass does not matter. It all depends on how long I hold it. For a minute or two, it’s fairly light. If I hold it for an hour straight, its weight might make my arm ache a little. If I hold it for a day, my arm will likely cramp up and feel completely numb and paralyzed, forcing me to drop the glass. In each case, the weight of the glass doesn’t change; but the longer I hold it, the heavier it feels to me.”

As the class shook their heads in agreement, she continued. “Your stresses and worries in life are much like this glass of water. Think about them for a while and nothing happens. Think about them a bit longer and you begin to ache. Think about them all day long, and you will be incapable of doing anything else until you drop them.”