



Sagebrush 99

The Newsletter of Las Vegas Valley, Nevada Retired Public Employees Association of California

Announces:

Due to the risks to our members associated with the Coronavirus and the uncertainty of when a meeting place for groups can occur in Nevada, we will be having a Zoom Membership Meeting on Thursday, July 16, 2020 at 11:00 AM. RPEA headquarters will contact you to invite you to the Zoom meeting and subsequently follow up with instructions on how to join the meeting.

Our Speaker: William Wallace, RPEA Membership Chair

President's Message By Marlene Baker

Hi Everyone! Our May meeting was not as successful as I had anticipated. I appreciate those of you who did attend. We tried to discuss ideas to keep the membership of our chapter growing and ideas for getting more participation in the chapter. We decided to meet again by Zoom to discuss this matter further in July. Our chapter needs to stay alive and active as issues regarding the need for RPEA to speak on our behalf to preserve our pensions and benefits is crucial in these uncertain times. We will be

discussing at this meeting whether we want to continue this chapter or disband it. A vote will be taken at our September meeting. I find that due to my health and other concerns I probably will be moving out of the state in September and will no longer be a part of the chapter. I am still recovering from my illnesses and am staying socially distant at home most of the time. Headquarters will be contacting you with information about joining the July Zoom meeting. Hopefully more people will participate who live too far away from our usual meeting site.

At the May meeting, Bill Wallace offered to send us some information to include in the newsletter. This information appears below:

“Vote for people that support your values and people that are looking out for your economic security.

Chapters are the bedrock of RPEA. We are losing chapters, either because of the lack of interest amongst individual members or because of a lack of understanding by individuals of their importance to the strength of RPEA. It takes all of us. Power is synonymous with numbers. The larger the number, the greater the power. When a chapter dies, it diminishes the power necessary to maintain our retirement security. I realize it is not easy work, but it is necessary work. If you cherish your retirement security and your economic freedom, Your participation at some level is a must.

The Retired Public Employees Association works hard to protect your pension and your insurance benefits. This is one of the main advantages for being a member and one of the main reasons we are here for you.

If health benefits are not a part of your retirement package, RPEA has created affiliates that can provide it at reasonable cost. Dental, Vision, Medical Transport, Life Insurance, Long Term Care, Medicare Supplement Insurance, Hearing Plan, Cancer/Heart/Stroke Insurance, Accident Insurance, Annuities, and Discounts Nationwide.

RPEA’S Advocacy & Legislative Accomplishments

The Retired Public Employees’ Association (RPEA) of California began as a Retired State Government Employees’ Association of California in 1958. An amendment to the Articles of Incorporation changed the name

in July 1969. This change allowed the association to include classified school employees and retirees from other agencies contracting with CalPERS for pension management. RPEA’s primary mission is to maintain and enhance the pension and health benefits of retired public employees.

Over the past 60 years RPEA has been a leading force as they worked with others to accomplish many of the benefits enjoyed by members today.

In 1961 legislation was passed to give CalPERS the task of implementing the Public Employees Medical and Hospital Care Act (PEMHCA). CalPERS now administers health plans for hundreds of thousands active and retired public employees.

In 1974, a “Retiree” position was added to the CalPERS Board. This position is elected by a vote of all retirees and represents the interests of all retired members of CalPERS.

In 1978, RPEA retained the services of Aaron Read and Associates to assist in lobbying for the Association.

In 1982, RPEA sponsored legislation creating the Investment Dividend Disbursement Account to raise the purchasing power of retirees up to 75%.

Because of continued efforts to raid PERS retirement accounts to balance the state budgets, by Governors Deukmejian and Wilson, RPEA and Aaron Read drafted **Proposition 162** to give PERS the “Plenary Authority” over the funds held in trust for its members. The passage of Proposition 162 established the composition of the CalPERS board in the State Constitution.

With the help of Aaron Read, the State Controller agreed to allow a card insert with information about retiree organizations to be sent out with the monthly warrant statement. This card insert program was managed by RPEA for about 20 years.

In 1999, the investments held by CalPERS exceeded 100% of that needed to pay benefits for the future. The excess in investment earnings allowed CalPERS to permit many agencies a “pension holiday” for payment of contributions to the fund from 1999 to 2002. In 1999 the legislature passed SB 400 which provided for a 1-6% Cost of Living Allowance and safety workers a retirement package of 3% at age 50.

In 2012, the RPEA Director of Health Benefits negotiated with CalPERS to include drug plans to allow members to obtain medications for up to 90 days with a lower cost mail delivery service.

In 2013, RPEA and Aaron Read’s office negotiated with the Governor on proposed Pension Reform legislation. Many of the harsher reforms were dropped, while RPEA did support some of the needed reforms.

In 2015, at the request of the RPEA Stockton Chapter, RPEA sponsored legislation (**AB 215 Gordon**) which allows retirees to organize and participate in bankruptcy court to protect the claims of retirees should their public agency declare bankruptcy.

RPEA continues to work with CalPERS staff and the CalPERS Board of Administration to solve problems with retirees' pension and health benefits to insure a comfortable lifestyle in retirement.

In 2017, RPEA supported legislation to protect employees of Joint Powers Authorities (JPA) from losing their pensions when a JPA ceases operation and fails to pay its termination fee to the pension fund that covers its employees.

RPEA dues are not used for political campaigns. RPEA has formed independent committees, the Legislative Action Organization (LAO) and the Independent Expenditure Committee (IEC) to provide

volunteer contributions to be used for political campaigns (LAO) and information campaigns on legislation or ballot initiatives (IEC).

For over 60 years, RPEA has been active in representing the interest of retirees. We have participated at every level of government to expand and protect the rights and benefits the retired public employees have earned. Threats continue to denigrate public employment and roll back our rights to a secure retirement life. Even with the Covid-19 pandemic, RPEA is representing your interests to insure you have retirement security.

RPEA will continue to fight back and present the truth about what retirees have earned as deferred compensation for the years working at all levels for the people of California.

As we move forward, it is imperative that the truth be in the forefront of public pension discussions. Public employees have allowed pensions to be defined as a benefit and as an unearned entitlement. We need to re-frame the discussion to accurately reflect the facts. In truth, a pension is created by the earned income we deferred from our hourly wages when we were working. It is pay for work already performed. The income you receive from a pension is similar to the income that you receive from a personal IRA. Both are created when you set aside current income to provide money to live on when you retire. I am certain you would correct anyone that suggests you did not earn your IRA. Your pension is no different. You earned your pension each day you worked. So enjoy it and defend it with the truth. Gently explain to anyone that raises a question. “I earned it one hour at a time.”

Remember, you are not alone. Your sisters and brothers of RPEA are in your corner for the struggle to save our retirement security, but your participation is vital to the strength of RPEA. So please join the ZOOM

meeting of July 16th and let's talk about **your** importance to the strength and survival of RPEA and **your** role in saving our retirement security. If each of us does a little, we can accomplish a great deal together.

Thank you, Bill Wallace
Membership Director"

**OUR NEXT SCHEDULED
MEETING WILL BE THURSDAY,
SEPT. 17, 2020**

TREASURER'S REPORT

The balance in our Chapter 99 Bank Account on May 31, 2020 was \$3,316.70. Dues deposit was \$234.65 and expenses for mailing and newsletter was \$199.88.

**WHO'S WHO SAGEBRUSH
CHAPTER 99**

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**Please notify RPEA headquarters of
any changes to address or status**

If you discard our newsletter in the trash, please shred it as there are email addresses and telephone numbers listed in it. Our directors are volunteers and we don't want unnecessary solicitations coming our way because of publication of those numbers.