

PERS BOARD MEETING/LAS VEGAS, DECEMBER 14

Several times a year, the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) Board takes their monthly meeting on the road to Las Vegas, and December 14, 2017 was one of those instances. RPEN was well represented at this meeting! Executive Director Terri Laird traveled south for the meeting and our Southern Chapters were also well represented, including Laura Leavitt from the LV Chapter; Sandie Mix from the HE Chapter and Rose Ann Rabiola Miele and Marcia Jackson from the BC Chapter.

The meeting opened with public comment on one of the key items on the agenda, Post Retirement Increases, and how PERS has historically handled them. Tom Wellman spoke first on behalf of the Retired Nevada State Educators Association; Geri North from the Clark County Retired Educators Association also spoke as did Steve Horner, another rep from the Clark County group. Each complained that tying the COLA's (Cost of Living Adjustments) to the CPI index is unfair since the biggest expense retirees' face is escalating healthcare costs. Leavitt also spoke with similar concerns, on behalf of another group she is affiliated with, AFSCME Retiree Chapter 4041, who is also part of RPEN's public employee coalition during Legislative sessions. The last to speak was Terri Laird, who agreed with those that spoke before. She said since she's been with RPEN (9 years) PRI's have been a top concern of our members.

Under Item 6.1 on the board agenda, members heard a historical perspective on PRI's from PERS Executive Officer Tina Leiss. Leiss first shared her report to the board at the November meeting held in Carson City, but repeated the information for those attending this meeting in the south. As RPEN reported following the November PERS meeting, PRI's first began in 1963 and several changes occurred legislatively in 1981, 1983 as well as 1989, 1991 and most recently in 2015!

She said any changes by the board would have to be approved by the Legislature and recommended five items for consideration that were unanimously approved. They are as follows:

- 1) Continue to use a fiscal year cap calculation for the PRI cap using June numbers,
- 2) Move the date of implementation of the PRI cap from July 1 to September 1 of each year,
- 3) Authorize staff to perform a full verification of all PRIs paid from 2009 forward and make any necessary adjustments (some members may have been underpaid, some may have been overpaid),
- 4) Direct staff to review alternative indexes (healthcare CPI for instance), and
- 5) Direct the new communications position to work with the communications consultant to develop a plan to clear communicate PRI information to members and beneficiaries

The verification project could take up to one year to complete. Leiss said PERS will use a PERS employee to complete the process, and said it would not take any resources away from any other programs within the agency.