

EXCERPTS FROM A MESSAGE TO ALL UNIT PRESIDENTS (April 1, 2016)

*Bob Grover
KARSP President*

The Kansas Legislature in recent years has not supported public retirees, teachers, and funding for education. I am asking for your help encouraging KARSP members to address this problem by engaging in government.

The Kansas Legislature has not increased monthly KPERS benefits for **nineteen** years. This session the Legislature passed a budget bill that grants the governor authority to delay the state's contribution to KPERS this fiscal year, a move that could free up to \$100 million to cushion the state's ending balance.

The bill requires the governor to pay back the delayed money by September 30 with 8 percent interest; however, the state's revenues fell \$56.7 million below estimates in February, dropping the estimated end-of-fiscal-year budget balance from about \$6 million to a \$50 million deficit.

Four months remain in this fiscal year. How many think the state's revenue will meet its obligation to repay the \$100 million delay of payment with interest?

For the last decade KARSP has been a leader of the Kansas Coalition of Public Retirees (KCPR) in an effort to increase retirement benefits on behalf of 295,000 KPERS members. Please check the KCPR website (ksretirees.org) to learn what the coalition is doing.

In recent years the effort to protect KPERS has been extremely difficult because of the small government ideology of the governor and the legislature's leader-ship. This ideology also prefers private education over public, privatized retirement systems, a tax structure that benefits a select group, fewer public services, limited professional organization and union authority, and state control of school curricula.

What can we do when the legislature's majority does not support our life's profession, education, and our public retiree system? Our theme for KARSP this election year is "Engage in Government." KARSP is nonpartisan, and education and protecting KPERS are nonpartisan issues. Whether you are Independent, Republican, or Democrat, I'm asking you as KARSP members to become involved in Government. Below are ways to engage:

Stay current on KPERS and education issues before the Kansas Legislature. Subscribe to the KNEA email legislative update Under the Dome . You don't have to be a member.

Read the KCPR Update email. If you don't receive it, contact Ernie Claudel at eclaudel1@gmail.com.

Encourage friends of KPERS and education to run for the local school board or for the legislature.

Keep your relatives and friends informed of education and retirement issues, and encourage them to contact their legislators. Together, we, our friends, and our neighbors can have a powerful voice in Topeka.

Vote and encourage members of your family and your friends to vote in the next elections.

Help others register to vote. Provide transportation if people need rides to register and to vote.

A current list of Kansas Senate and House candidates is available at eclaudel1@gmail.com.

The legislature and governor have not supported public retirees and education in recent years. Together we can make a difference, but WE MUST ACT!

For Strength, we need you!