

Positions Points on Pension Mergers and Raids

About the past legislative session and the raid attempts on the LEOFF 1 pension system, the role of the LEOFF I Coalition has been to lobby, to educate and to communicate, being ever vigilant to protect the LEOFF 1 law and the LEOFF 1 pension system. We urge legislators:

1. No mergers.
2. Stop raid attempts on LEOFF 1 funds.
3. Leave medical coverage alone.
4. Legislators targeted pension raids on elderly LEOFF 1 retirees, some with conditions that leave them vulnerable, unable to come to Olympia and personally lobby to protect their pensions. When we were hired, our pensions were part of a contract. We urge legislators to keep the promise, the contract made for our pensions, by leaving our LEOFF 1 pension alone.
5. We were career fire fighters and law enforcement officers who worked 24/7, in all weather, were denied from sharing holidays, birthdays, children's events and family time because we were on the job securing our communities.
6. Over funding projected by actuaries is only a projection – which can change. A downturn in the economy can wipe out over funding easily. Actuarial assumptions can shift, people are living longer due to better health care and life habits. The temptation for the legislature to dig into LEOFF 1 funds must be resisted.
7. LEOFF 1 is a defined benefit. By opening the law for merger or other changes, the door is wide open, for possible changes of anything and everything promised under the LEOFF 1 pension plan (like medical and long-term nursing care coverage that is now paid by the employer under LEOFF 1).
8. It's morally wrong to balance the State budget on the backs of pension retirees.
9. The reason TRS 1 was being proposed to merge with LEOFF 1 is that the State and school districts have been under funding the Teachers' Retirement System for many years.
10. Legislators should not have allowed the TRS 1 retirement system to dwindle from years of insufficient State and school district funding. But TRS 1 is a separate matter. It is the responsibility of legislators to ensure that all state pensions are funded adequately.