



LEOFF I COALITION

Law Enforcement Officers & Fire Fighters



Fall 2009

LEOFF I Coalition Board

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The mission of the LEOFF I Coalition is to protect the integrity of the LEOFF I Law and LEOFF I Retirement Trust Fund. LEOFF I Coalition members are law enforcement officers and fire fighters.

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www.LEOFF1coalition.org



President's Message

By Bob Monize, LEOFF I Coalition President and input from Dave Peery, Seattle Fire Local #27 and Don Daniels, Ret. Seattle PD Officer and Mark Curtis, Ret. Thurston Co. S.O. Deputy Sheriff

We have just over 4,000 people in the Coalition. Other brother organizations occasionally lobby for change and, on a case by case basis, we review their proposals and decide whether the requested changes are important enough to risk opening LEOFF I law to achieve them.

We have stood in support of those issues we felt were appropriate and simply chose to remain silent when in disagreement. We communicate with our brother organizations as we feel appropriate in the protection of the current laws regarding member pensions.

There are those who feel "That's OUR money" in the "Co-mingled Trust Fund" and, should there be a surplus,

portions of the surplus should be remitted to members or the benefits should be increased to the degree the surplus would allow.

The Coalition's position is that LEOFF I law clearly states our pension is a "Defined Benefit" that is the responsibility of the State of Washington to administer as written in statutes. To claim a portion of that as "Ours" places our position in regarding the State as the sole responsible party of

providing and administering benefits in jeopardy. If we are "entitled" to or have an ownership position to portions of the Co-mingled Trust Fund then why would we not suffer losses when fund investments lose money?

"...LEOFF I law clearly states our pension is a 'Defined Benefit'..."

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Should We Ask for More Benefits? NO!

The LEOFF I Coalition President and Board feel it is too dangerous to ask for more benefits. Members, it's important to remember that LEOFF I has a great retirement pension fund. The state legislators are looking for more money. If we ask for more benefits, that opens up our retirement trust fund and we have a good chance of losing what we already have. Please remember it is better to be safe than sorry!

President's Message

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The recent history of investment losses supports our earlier reluctance to press for a cash-out of so-called surplus funds. History has shown that those funds are at risk to the choices, good or ill, of those in charge of pension investments. While we applaud the wise investments as they prove positive for the overall trust fund, we also decry those unwise investments that place all funds at risk.

Since we have no input as to how those funds are invested, we feel no responsibility for losses incurred. Our belief remains firm in that LEOFF I pension law clearly states our pension is a defined benefit and is due our members under all circumstances.

As to the previously purported "surplus" we remain steadfast in our assertion that, when surpluses are shown to clearly exist, increased benefits are appropriate. The recent economic downturn should serve as a reminder that pension investments should be carefully invested and guarded and that any attempt to change/end current LEOFF I law lays open the door to risks that, in our opinion are unwise and unwarranted.

It is hoped that our brother organizations may reciprocate in a like manner in the interests of all our LEOFF I people. While we may not agree on all issues, we should strive to keep disputes to ourselves with the obvious intent of presenting as unified an appearance as possible.

Since our position is that the current status of pension law is appropriate, any changes must be viewed with a critical eye. Brother organizations should be aware that any challenge viewed by the Coalition will be vigorously defended by our organization, and no matter where the challenge originates, we stand ready to support efforts to defend core LEOFF I interests as we see appropriate. To that degree, we are the friend of all. Our record of support of basic pension law should be viewed as invaluable to LEOFF I interests.

On another note, the Coalition board had learned of

an IRS 990 code conflict caused by a Coalition director who had a for-profit business and sat on the Coalition non-profit board. The conflict was that work product of the Coalition was used to gain a financial benefit for the particular Director's website business. He had control of much of our work documents and wanted all Coalition assets.

He was cautioned on

this concern by several board directors. Our CPA made us aware of what constituted as a conflict of interest for the board and an attorney advised us to deal with the issue as a conflict. Bylaws had to be updated to avoid similar problems in the future. The individual had also been disruptive during board meetings, demanding the Coalition give him access to our database which would

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**Thank You, LEOFF I Coalition Members,
for Your Generous Contributions
Totaling Over \$31,000, as of Sept. 21, 2009!**

President's Message

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give him access to confidential documents and member donations. We denied his demands to access those records. We hold those records as private and will not allow our files to be used for any purpose not sanctioned by the majority of our board. The names of donors and amounts donated are privileged information that we believe members would prefer to remain private. We will not allow such access and view repeated attempts to gain that access as improper and unnecessary to the operations of the Coalition with the exception of those primary board members who manage our finances and who must report such basic information as may be legally required for tax/accounting purposes. In response to this particular Coalition director's behavior, the LEOFF I Coalition (by a 7 to 1 vote of its board) removed the director from the Coalition board.

Lastly, we regret to announce that the RSPOA have left our ranks. We valued their input. Sadly, their leadership prefers to believe that they are better served to separate from the Coalition. They will be missed. Where possible, we will support their attempts to preserve and protect current pension law and to oppose any threats thereto. We look forward to working together with those groups who share our concerns and interests.

Despite everything, the Coalition remains committed to all LEOFF I members, and will continue to serve as their watchdog for the LEOFF I pension. We will continue to protect their interests against any legislation or other action, which would jeopardize LEOFF I's pension system. The Coalition has represented its members well for almost nine years and will continue to do so in the future.

Any and all LEOFF I people are welcome to be a part of the Coalition. You are welcome to write in to remove yourself, or, to register with the Coalition as we are all volunteers and free to think for ourselves. 🇺🇸

California Pension Re-negotiation Initiative FAILS

Good News for Washington Pensioners!

By Bob Monize, LEOFF I Coalition President

The California Initiative effort to cause pension benefits to be re-negotiated was expected to pass due to serious State stress revenue trouble.

Yet, the petition issue failed. Not enough people supported the idea in that State. The failure may be good for Washington LEOFF I pensioners, though it is unclear whether any future California effort could be a concern for us. Initiative #08-0018, Amdt. 31-5 (31350) IS ENDED FOR THIS YEAR.

For more information, please visit the California Secretary of State website at www.sos.ca.gov. 🇺🇸



The LEOFF I Coalition welcomes all retired and active members of the LEOFF I Retirement System to be a part of the Coalition.

To join or to remove yourself, please write to: LEOFF I Coalition
PMB 127 • 855 Trosper RD SW STE 108 • Tumwater, WA 98512.

Please visit our website www.leoff1coalition.org



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President Bob Monize:

I am writing this letter as a very concerned LEOFF I member. It is quite apparent to me that we are in a very dangerous time period for our retirement pension fund. I am acquainted with several LEOFF I Coalition board members and their excellent backgrounds. We are fortunate to have the board members volunteering to support our retirement concerns. I have contributed almost every year that we have been in existence. I would hope that our members realize that without our members' support we will be in trouble in the near future. I am sending in \$100.00 to show my support for the effort that the Coalition is doing on a daily basis. Keep up the good work and I appreciate each and every one of our board members.

Bill Wiester, Retired Grant County Sheriff

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How to Become a LEOFF I Coalition Board Member

1. Be a LEOFF I person and available the whole year for meetings, at least 7 per year.
2. Be a member of a sitting group already on the Board, such as Washington State Retired Deputy Sheriff's, Police Officers' Assoc. or be a member of the Seattle Fire local 27 and ask your president to assign you if there is an opening
3. Register your self as interested in one of the At-Large Board positions created a few years ago to invite independent LEOFF I members to participate from the east and west. Ask our Coalition President to be appointed in the future when a position comes open.