



LEOFF I COALITION

Law Enforcement Officers & Fire Fighters

Representing Retired and Active Members
of the LEOFF I Retirement System

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. The LEOFF I Coalition is a 501 c 5 non profit and nonpartisan LEOFF I pension volunteer organization.

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2010-2011 Annual Report

Thank You Legislators!

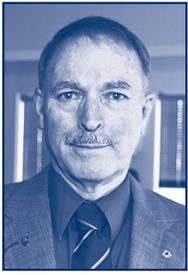


Front Row: Mark Curtis (Ret. Thurston Co. SO), Rep. Gary Alexander, Rep. Ross Hunter, Rep. Ann Rivers, John Surprenant (Ret. Thurston Co. SO), Trevor Seal (Ret. Olympia PD), and Jim Chamberlain. Back Row: Dave Peery (Ret. Seattle Fire Local 27), Larry Rohr (Ret. Olympia PD), Rep. Ed Orcutt, and Bill Eppenstein (Ret. Olympia PD).

We owe a debt of gratitude to those legislators who took the time to examine HB 2097, listen to our voice...and yours, and wisely decided to look a little deeper. Representatives Ross Hunter, (D) 48th Dist., King County; Gary Alexander, (R) 20th Dist., Lewis and Thurston Counties; Bruce Dammeier, (R) 25th Dist., Pierce County; Ed Orcutt, (R) 18th Dist., Clark and Cowlitz Counties; Barbara Bailey, (R) 10th Dist., Island, Skagit and Snohomish Counties; Bruce Chandler, (R) 15th Dist., Clark, Klickitat, Yakima and Skamania Counties; Larry Haler, (R) 8th Dist., Benton County; Bill Hinkle, (R) 13th Dist., Grant Kittitas and Yakima Counties; Kevin Parker, (R) 6th Dist., Spokane County; Charles Ross, (R) 14th Dist., Yakima County; Joe Schmick, (R) 9th Dist., Adams, Asotin, Franklin, Garfield, Whitman and Spokane Counties; JT Wilcox, (R) 2nd Dist., Pierce and Thurston Counties; Ann Rivers, (R) 18th Dist., Clark and Cowlitz Counties; and Mike Armstrong, (R) 12th Dist., Chelan, Douglas, Grant and Okanogan Counties, were especially helpful in that effort.

We also want to thank these legislators that took the time to listen to our concerns about HB 2097: Sen. Derek Kilmer, (D) 26th Dist., Kitsap and Pierce Counties; Rep. Fred Finn, (D) 35th Dist., Grays Harbor, Kitsap, Mason and Thurston Counties; Rep. Kathy Haigh, (D) 35th Dist., Grays Harbor, Kitsap, Mason and Thurston Counties; Sen. Jim Hargrove, (D) 24th Dist., Clallam, Grays Harbor and Jefferson Counties; Sen. Steve Conway, (D) 29th Dist., Pierce County; and Rep. Bob Hasegawa, (D) 11th Dist., King County (partial list). Thank you to our own Coalition Vice President Mark Curtis for his efforts in contacting legislators and members. Thanks also goes to Retired Firefighter President Richard Warbrouck for alerting LEOFF I members to the threat.

It takes time, both for our members and for legislators, to learn the basics of individual pension plans, their complexities and their intent. We thank the many legislators who took that time and those LEOFF I organizations and their members who make an effort to speak on our behalf before legislative committees. 🦅



Pension Update

By Dave Peery, Board Member

This was a very difficult legislative session. Our pension survived an attempt by the Washington State Council of Fire Fighters (WSCFF) and the Washington Council of Police & Sheriffs (WACOPS) to merge our LEOFF I pension system with the LEOFF 2 pension system, and all the control being taken over by the State and the LEOFF 2 Pension Board.

Your letters, emails, and phone calls were the reasons that legislators killed HB 2097 and asked that a full study of the bill be completed before any further action is taken. Were it not for your frequent correspondence with legislators in protest to this poorly written bill we would now find ourselves trying to defend our pension rights and our medical benefits before a legislature that simply wants to move on.

Thank you for your swift response. When LEOFF 2 leadership tried to peddle their bill as one that held no danger for LEOFF I and falsely stated that the bill even had our blessings, it took all your calls of protest to convince legislators that they had not been told the whole story.

LEOFF 2 leadership (primarily WSCFF and WACOPS) made every attempt to introduce this bill with no notice to LEOFF I organizations; no input, no warning and no consideration. We were astounded and disappointed that a bill that deals with the very core of our retirement lives would be introduced in such a fashion. When we asked for your help you responded with great vigor.

Now we have to ask for more help. Pension laws can be complex and confusing. Toss in a separate med-

ical coverage requirement and you have the makings of a puzzle that few of our members...and few legislators fully understand. The state legislature is an ongoing, dynamic group of individuals who are elected from the public ranks and many of them have no specific back-

ground in pension law. When asked to deal with weighty issues of pension rights, medical services and the many local, state and federal regulations that may apply, it is critical to be able to speak openly and honestly with those legislators about our pension system and help them understand both the limits and the

guarantees written in the laws governing our system.

The LEOFF I Coalition makes every attempt to educate and keep YOU, its members, legislators and our attorney, informed about LEOFF rights, responsibilities and general issues. To do that we need to:

- keep our website up and running,
- have someone answer the phone,
- pay for postage and printing,
- pay phone bills,
- correspond with you, our members, legislators and our attorney.

Those tasks cost money. Our only source of funds comes from people such as you. Our board members are volunteers, none of them are paid. We do compensate those members who must travel from eastern Washington for their travel expenses. All other funds are used to protect our pension rights and benefits.

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Members & Legislators, Did You Know? When the last LEOFF I beneficiary passes away, the remaining pension money (if any) goes back to the State. If Pension fund money runs out before the last LEOFF I beneficiary passes away, the state is responsible for funding the pension for the remainder of that beneficiary's life.

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Pension Update

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Other LEOFF I organizations have a dues structure or other ways to access funds. We have preferred to simply ask members for financial help only on an as-need basis. Today, we are asking for your help. HB 2097 is the biggest threat we have faced since the 2000/2001 pension grab (again by LEOFF 2 leadership). This bill proposes to merge LEOFF I and 2. Beyond that, all we are certain of is that our system of medical benefits could be at risk, our pension rights would be reviewed by a committee comprised of LEOFF 2 members and state representatives with no guarantee that any LEOFF I members would have an opportunity to sit on those committees or boards.

The bill language was vague and poorly defined – not the type of bill lan-

guage that we would willingly endorse. We (LEOFF I Coalition) retained pension rights attorney Joseph Fischnaller to review the original bill and get a better idea of the intent of the bill language. The Retired Firefighters of Washington (RFFOW) retained the services of former State Supreme Court Justice Phil Talmadge to do the same. Both attorneys' bill assessments were very similar. HB 2097 was dangerous not specifically because of what it said, but precisely for what it did not say.

Once we had that information we began to contact our members and that's when many of you took to your computers, phones and emails to raise a howl of protest to this naked power-grab by some LEOFF 2 leadership. We want to thank every one of you who answered the call. It alerted legislators to the fact that this bill was not welcomed by LEOFF I and that the bill was poorly crafted. Your efforts resulted in the pro-

posal to establish a study committee whose task it is to review the bill, ask for input from all affected parties and then to respond to the Legislative Ways and Means Committee by December 15th of this year.

Space does not permit a lengthy discussion of all the events leading to the drafting and introduction of this horrendous bill. If you would like a better understanding please visit our website at www.leoff1coalition.org or simply go to the legislative website at www.leg.wa.gov and review HB 2097.

Our funds are limited. We have attorney Joseph Fischnaller and President of the LEOFF Education Association Dan Downs available if needed to appear and/or testify before the com-

mittee conducting the merger proposal. Many of our members have no other retirement funds available to them. Our pension and our medical benefits are crucial to a retirement with dignity. We are prepared to use all means necessary to protect those rights.

We do need your help. Your donations and your cards, letters and emails are the wall of protection that we count on to ensure our rights. We use your donations to pay for website maintenance, mailing expenses, annual report printing and mailing costs, and legal expenses when we retain attorneys to represent members whose benefits are challenged.

This is the biggest threat we currently face. If we are successful in stopping this merger proposal we may be less threatened in the future but for now we must respond to this threat today. Your donations are greatly appreciated. 🐾

The next Legislative Session starts January 12, 2012. Who do you think will go after our pension next?

It's important to check the LEOFF I Coalition website at www.leoff1coalition.org daily for the most up to date information!

The LEOFF I Coalition Board Members volunteer their time to protect OUR LEOFF I pension and medical benefits.



LEOFF I COALITION

Law Enforcement Officers and Fire Fighters

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Invest in Our Pension – Fund the Fight!

Why should you donate to the LEOFF I Coalition?

It takes money to operate the LEOFF I Coalition. “What does the LEOFF I Coalition spend money on?” you ask. Well, just like a business, the Coalition pays for: attorney fees, someone answering the phone, updating the LEOFF I Coalition website with the latest information, phone bills, insurance, travel expenses for board members who volunteer their time to attend meetings, printing, postage, and other operating costs.

The LEOFF I Coalition’s number one goal is to protect our pension benefits. The LEOFF 2 leadership (WSCFF and WACOPS) want to take our pension money for themselves. WACOPS went after our pension money during the 2011 Legislative Session. At this time we don’t know what their intention is for the 2012

Legislative Session. WSCFF and WACOPS have paid lobbyists and are at the Capitol every day during session to lobby for more money and benefits. They also meet with legislators out of session on their issues. Both WSCFF and WACOPS donate a lot of money to

legislative campaigns. LEOFF I Coalition, being a non profit organization, cannot and does not donate money to any campaign; it can only endorse and vote for a candidate. Only individual LEOFF I members can donate to a campaign. It takes money to fund the fight against LEOFF 2 leader-

ship and tell our story to the legislators! Please make a donation now to the LEOFF I Coalition with the enclosed envelope in your Annual Report. 📁

Attorney Joe Fischnaller, with his expertise of LEOFF I medical benefits, has been retained by the LEOFF I Coalition to begin working together with Phil Talmadge in researching the various aspects of HB 2097.

Your continued support is greatly appreciated.

Thank You!