



Law Enforcement Officers & Fire Fighters

Representing Retired and Active Members of the LEOFF I Retirement System

2011-2012 Annual Report





Law Enforcement Officers & Fire Fighters

LEOFF I Coalition Board

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There are 8,000 LEOFF I Beneficiaries!

Another Year and We Still Have Our Pension

By President Don Daniels

nother year has passed, and we've fought another battle to protect our pension benefits and thankfully we have won another victory.

For the second year in a row, the LEOFF I community has beaten back attempts to merge the LEOFF I and

LEOFF 2 pension systems. HB 2350 and SB 6563 were bad bills for us. They gave us no benefits, only takeaways, and in reviewing them, we found a number of constitutional and contractual issues.

The LEOFF I Coalition thanks those legislators who helped prevent this ill-advised merger. We also want to thank all of you who took the time to email, write, phone or personally contact your legislators. Your efforts made a real difference in this last campaign.

We can enjoy the latest triumph, but the fight is not over. Washington State Council of Fire Fighters (WSCFF) plans to introduce the merger bill again next year, and we will have to be prepared to fight to protect our pension benefits in the 2013 legislative session.

What really disappoints me in this matter is where the proposal originated: with our LEOFF 2 brothers and sisters. They consciously chose to exclude LEOFF I organizations from participating in the earliest stages of a merger proposal and then attempted to secure passage of the merger bill before our members could mount an adequate response. They were wrong in what they tried to do, and they were wrong in their assessment of their ability to gain bill passage. In my view, they have forfeited any level of trust or respect normally afforded them by being members of our professions.

Elsewhere in this issue, you will find an article on the 2012 merger bills. It is an overview of the merger problem and what you can do to assist us in our continued fight against the attempt to merge the LEOFF I and LEOFF 2 pension plans.

In closing, let me assure you that the coalition will continue its efforts to protect your pension rights and benefits against anyone who would attempt to diminish or control them.

The LEOFF I Coalition 2011-2012 Annual Report is for active and retired members of the LEOFF I Retirement System (Law Enforcement Officers and Fire Fighters). LEOFF I Coalition is a 501 c 5 non profit organization Mailing Address: LEOFF I Coalition, 855 Trosper Rd. SW Ste. 108, PMB 127 • Tumwater, WA 98512

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Overview of the Merger Bill

Means did not have a committee hearing on HB 2350 thanks to the chair and ranking chair, Gary Alexander. The Senate Ways and Means Committee had a committee hearing on SB 6563. Senator Ed Murray (D), King County, and Senator Lisa Brown, (D) Spokane, both sponsored this bad bill. After the committee hearing, they knew there weren't enough votes to pass it out of the committee, so the Senate Ways and Means Democrats attached SB 6563 as part of the Democrat budget.

9th Order of Business

Thanks to Republican Senators Joe Zarelli (R), Dist. 18 Clark and Cowlitz Counties, Don Benton (R), Clark County, Mark Schoesler (R), Dist. 9, Adams, Asotin, Franklin, Garfield, Spokane, and Whitman Counties, and Mike Hewitt (R), Dist. 16, Benton, Columbia, Franklin, Walla Walla Counties, on Friday March, 2, about 4:50pm during a routine session on the floor, the republicans moved for a 9th order of business, a procedural maneuver that allowed the Republicans to seize control of the Senate floor and advance the Republican budget proposal from the committee to the senate floor. The Republicans used a version of the budget that was submitted by the Governor in December 2011.

With 27 Democrats and 22 Republicans in the senate, the roll call was sounded; all 22 Republicans and 3 moderate Democrat senators (Rodney Tom, Dist. 48, King County; Senator Jim Kastama, Dist 25, Pierce County; Tim Sheldon, Dist. 35, Grays Harbor, Kitsap, Mason and Thurston County) voted for, and passed the Republican budget, that also stopped the LEOFF I and LEOFF 2 merger. This stopped the WSCFF from being in control of the LEOFF I pension plan. This is what saved your retirement plan. With 25 "yes's" and 24 Democrat "no's," the last time this maneuver was used was in 1997.

Remember to vote for the people who supported your retirement pension.

Legislators Who Were Not LEOFF I Friends



Sponsors and Supporters of These Bad Bills

The State Senators and House of Representatives legislators that sponsored and supported the BAD BILLS SB 6563 and HB 2350 for the LEOFF I and LEOFF 2 merger are as follows:

Senator Ed Murray (D) - Dist. 43, King County
Senator Lisa Brown (D) - Dist. 3, Spokane County
Senator Craig Pridemore (D) - Dist. 49, Clark County
Senator Steve Hobbs (D) - Dist. 44, Snohomish County
Senator Nick Harper (D) - Dist. 38, Snohomish County
Senator Jeannie Kohl-Welles (D) - Dist. 36, King County
Senator Maralyn Chase (D) - Dist. 32, King and
Snohomish Counties

Senator Steve Conway (D) - Dist. 29, Pierce County Senator Karen Fraser (D) - Dist. 22, Thurston County Senator Paull Shin (D) - Dist. 21, Snohomish County Senator Brian Hatfield (D) - Dist. 19, Cowlitz, Grays

Harbor, Pacific, and Wahkiakum Counties Senator Margarita Prentice (D) - Dist. 11, King County Representative Pat Sullivan (D) - Dist. 47, King County Representative Kevin Van De Wege (D) - Dist. 24,

Clallam, Grays Harbor, and Jefferson

Representative Chris Reykdal (D) - Dist. 22, Pos. 1, Thurston County

Representative Sam Hunt (D) - Dist. 22, Pos. 2, Thurston County

Representative Timm Ormsby (D) - Dist. 3, Pos. 2, Spokane County

The Ways and Means Committee: What Do They Do?

The Senate and House Ways and Means Committee is the primary fiscal committee for the Washington State. The Committee has responsibility for developing operating and capital budgets, and tax and pension policy.

Who and What Are the Driving Forces Behind These Bills, And Why?

- 1. Washington State Council of Fire Fighters (WSCFF) was the driving force behind the merger. A merger of the LEOFF I and LEOFF 2 pension plans, as these merger bills propose, would give plan 2 members control of the new plan and access to LEOFF I's purported "surplus" or "excess." They believe that any surplus belongs to plan 2 members.
- 2. Senate Democrats: Why did the Senate Democrats want the LEOFF I and LEOFF 2 merger? They wanted the merger because SB 6563 and HB 2350 were created in such a way that would allow the state to skip a \$74 million dollar pay-
- ment to LEOFF 2 pensions, thus helping the Senate Democrat's budget pencil out. They were proposing that the state shift hundreds of millions of dollars in current expenses to the 2013- 2015 budget when the state already expects a shortfall of \$1 to \$2 billion dollars.
- 3. The WSCFF knew the state Democrats were struggling to develop a balanced state budget and needed more money. As a result, Kelly Fox, two paid lobbyists, and a large number of volunteers went to the Capitol every day during session working hard to lobby in favor of the merger.

Why Does the Coalition Oppose the Merger?

- he coalition opposes merging plans 1 and 2 for many reasons. Some of the most important reasons are:
- 1. The bills contain a number of constitutional and contractual issues.
- 2. Administration of all benefits, including health
 - care benefits for LEOFF I members, will be handed over to the merged plan's board of trustees. We fear losing current and future healthcare benefits now decided by local disability boards.
- 3. We see no additional benefits in these merger bills. We have nothing to gain and much to lose.



Check out our website! www.leoff1coalition.org

Money • Fight • Save Your Pension Plan

e need your donations to continue the fight to stop the LEOFF I and LEOFF 2 merger that will continue in the next legislative session.

Your support will pay for:

- Lobbying Expenses
- Attorney Fees
- Legislative Research
- Website Updates
- Correspondence with Members and Legislators
- Office Expenses and Phone Bill
- Printing, Mail Prep, and Postage
- Travel Expenses

These tasks all cost money. Our only source of funding comes from people such as you. None of our board members or volunteers are paid. We do compensate those members who must travel to meetings.

Thank You for Your Continued Support Over the Years!

The 2013 Legislative Session: WSCFF wants our LEOFF I Monies

he Washington State Council of Fire fighters (WSCFF), three paid lobbyists and one staff member are already preparing for the 2013 legislative session. Evidenced by their correspon-

dence with members, the WSCFF continues to believe that any surplus that may or may not exist in the LEOFF I plan pension fund belongs to the LEOFF 2 plan, not the State of Washington, nor LEOFF I members. In an email to members, WSCFF states:

"...We will remain committed to securing LEOFF monies for LEOFF members - regardless of plan affiliation. The LEOFF members and the citizens of this state contributed those dollars for public safety pension plans, and they must remain dedicated to that intention."

This message indicates that as long as there is a potential surplus, they will continue to lobby for control of it whether Plan I members wish otherwise or not, and regardless of the fact that LEOFF 2

members never contributed to Plan I.

To further their political agenda, the WSCFF and LEOFF 2 members are working hard on campaigns to re-elect Democrats in the Senate and House that support their goal to merge the LEOFF I and LEOFF 2 pension plans. Their members are out doorbelling, putting up signs, and soliciting donations from the union and individuals for their campaigns. The WSCFF, with the help of Democrats, have been after your pension in the past and are going after it again in the 2013 legislative session.

The Fight Continues. What Can I Do to Help?

t is crucial that LEOFF I members continue to lobby for our pension through emails, writing letters, word-of-mouth, door-belling your neighborhood, calling your family and friends, and voting for the legislators that support the LEOFF I pension system. Ask the candidate what their position is regarding the unwanted LEOFF I and LEOFF 2 merger. Email your local legislators and please CC information@leoff-1coalition.org.

Make sure you use the legislator's campaign email rather than his/her legislative email (which usually ends in the suffix @leg.wa.gov). If you cannot find their campaign email or phone number, please call the LEOFF I office at 1 (877)

553-6631 or email us at information@leoff1coalition.org and we'll help you find the correct information.

In your e-mail, ask your candidate if he/she supports the LEOFF I and LEOFF 2 merger. Ask them to e-mail you back their answer. This way you have their answer on paper. Remember, the answer must come from the candidate, not the campaign manager or someone else on the campaign office. If their answer is, "No, I do not support the merger,"

help the candidate by door-belling your neighborhood, calling your friends and family and asking them to support your candidate by putting a sign in their yard, waving signs, donating money, and voting for them during the election.

How you vote is up to you, but you should consider **voting for the candidate who**

best-supports the issues most important to you and your family. The number one issue for LEOFF I members to lobby and vote for is that legislators vote "no" on any proposed LEOFF I and LEOFF 2 merger.

Another, and critical, way you can help is with your donations to the LEOFF I coalition. It takes money to

constantly fight these repeated attacks on our pension system and to maintain the coalition. What will your **donations** be used for? They will be used for lobbying and research expenses, attorney fees, correspondence with LEOFF I Coalition members and state legislators, website updates, graphic design, printing, postage and office expenses such as phone bills. We do appreciate your donations and thank you in advance for any you may send. The LEOFF I Coalition is an all-volunteer board.



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