

NEWSLETTER

Washington State School Retirees' Association



In this newsletter you'll get a legislative update and details about our first event of the year!

Pizza Party!

Tuesday, September 24

We hope you can join us for our welcome back pizza social. We will gather at our usual spot, Our Saviors Lutheran Church. Find out what friends have been up to since we last met and welcome new friends. Hear what plans are for the year and give input for future events. Learn how our scholarship recipients are doing and some of the projects our grants funded. Not to mention a fun game with prizes!

Please call Marianne Harvey 425-238-3124 or 425-348-4993 or email Ken Harvey at kenwes55@comcast.net and let us know if you plan to attend so we will be sure to have enough food.

We will provide a variety of pizzas, salad, and coffee/tea (plus, of course, dessert).

If pizza isn't your thing, bring your own lunch and join us for no cost and still enjoy good conversation and fellowship.

We are asking for \$10 to cover the cost of the pizza. Any extra collected will go into our scholarship fund.

We will have coffee hour starting at 11 AM and serve lunch at 11:30.

Our Saviors Lutheran Church

215 Mukilteo Blvd, Everett

WSSRA Board Announces General Election Endorsements

After the August 6, 2024 Primary Election, the WSSRA Board finalized its candidate endorsements for the 2024 General Election at its August 21, 2024 meeting.

Candidates' records and positions on issues important to retired school employees were scrutinized and endorsements were made for almost every race in the state's 49 legislative districts. This year WSSRA also took a position opposing three initiatives that will appear on the 2024 General Election Ballot.

The process began with the WSSR Political Action Committee making initial recommendations. These recommendations were sent to the WSSRA Legislative Committee that refined them before sending them to the WSSRA Board for the final decision.

Afterwards WSSR-PAC presented endorsement checks to WSSRA endorsed candidates in close races. These checks came only from PAC money contributed for that purpose. **WSSRA dues money is never used for political contributions.**

The WSSRA Board candidate endorsements in Unit 22's region are as follows:

Legislative District 10:

Senate Race: **No endorsement**

House Position 1: **Clyde Shavers**, Incumbent; Democrat

House Position 2: **Dave Paul**, Incumbent; Democrat

Legislative District: 21

House Position 1: **Strom Peterson**, Incumbent; Democrat

House Position 2: **Lillian Ortiz-Self**, Incumbent; Democrat

Legislative District: 38

House Position 1: **Julio Cortes**, Incumbent; Democrat

House Position 2: **Mary Fosse**, Incumbent; Democrat

Legislative District 39:

Senate Race: **Keith Wagoner**, Incumbent; Republican

House Position 1: **Sam Low**, Incumbent; Republican

House Position 2: **Carolyn Eslick**, Incumbent; Republican

Legislative District 44:

House Position 1: **Brandy Donaghy**, Incumbent; Democrat

House Position 2: **April Berg**, Incumbent; Democrat

State-wide Endorsements:

State Treasurer: **Mike Pellicciotti**, Incumbent; Democrat

Insurance Commissioner: **Patty Kuderer**; Democrat

WSSRA's Position on Initiatives 2109, 2117 and 2124:

The WSSRA Board took positions against three initiatives that will appear on the November ballot. These are **Initiative 2109**, to repeal the **Capital Gains Excise Tax**; **Initiative 2117**, to repeal the **Washington Climate Commitment Act** and prohibit future cap and trade or cap and tax programs; and **Initiative 2124**, to allow employees or self-employed persons to opt out of paying the payroll tax or receiving benefits under the **WA Cares Program**.

WSSRA's top legislative priority for the 2025 Legislative Session will be restoring an ongoing COLA for TRS 1 and PERS 1 retirees. 2025 will be the year to accomplish that, if the Legislature has sufficient funds. A bill passed during the 2023 session requires the Select Committee on Pension Policy (**SCPP**) to have a written recommendation on restoring the Plan 1 ongoing COLA ready for the 2025 Legislative Session.

Since restoring the COLA could cost as much as \$1.6 billion over ten years, the state must have the funds to make it happen. If funds are short because the **Capital Gains Excise Tax** or the **Climate Commitment Act** is repealed, the State won't have the money to restore the ongoing Plan 1 COLA or possibly even provide another ad hoc Plan 1 COLA for 2025.

The **Capital Gains Excise Tax**, passed in 2021, is a 7% tax on capital gains earned after someone has **already made** his or her first quarter million on long-term capital assets such as stocks, bonds or business interests- **not real estate sales**.

Only around 3,000 Washington residents, only 0.04% of the state population, pay this tax. They can bear the cost better than anyone else.

It generated for the state \$786 million in 2023 and \$433 million in the first half of 2024. The money funds schools, early learning, child care programs and school construction. If it is repealed, Washington will lose a major revenue source, likely requiring state budget cuts.

The **Climate Commitment Act** sets limits for major greenhouse gas emitters, such as oil refineries and utilities, requiring them to buy allowances at state auctions for every ton of air pollution created beyond that limit. These auctions raised \$1.82 billion in 2023 and \$292 million so far in 2024 for projects supporting the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

If the **CCA** is repealed, the state would lose another major revenue source, hundreds of climate and sustainability programs would lose funding, and state budget cuts could be necessary, eliminating a Plan 1 COLA.

WA Cares is the state's long-term care benefit implemented in 2019. Starting in 2026 it will provide vested individuals up to \$35,500 (adjusted for inflation) for long-term care services. It's been funded by a 0.58% payroll tax since 2023. If **Initiative 2124** passes and people opt out, **WA Cares** could become insolvent and collapse. Without **WA Cares**, most people would have to spend down their savings to \$2,000 or less to qualify for long-term care benefits under Medicare.

Tim Knopf

WSSRA Legislative Committee Member



Snohomish County School Retirees' Association

Sno-Isle 22

Mini Grant Application— 2024-25

Teachers or school staff working with students are eligible for our \$300 Mini-grants . The purpose of the Sno-Isle mini-grant program is to assist in providing supplies, equipment, help with field trip costs, or other special project outlays that can be used to defray costs not included in regular classroom budgets.

We've all been in education so we've tried to make it as simple as possible to complete the application.

Email completed application to Joan Penewell at joanpenewell@gmail.com or mail to Joan Penewell 10715 Birch Dr. NW Tulalip WA 98271

The application should include the following information:

1. Title and description of the project or activity (maximum one paragraph)
2. Educational value or goal of the project (one or two sentences)
3. Provide a basic project budget (doesn't have to be precise) that includes how the \$300 will be spent
4. Name of school, grade level(s) and number of students to be served
5. Print your name and provide your email address. Please state that you are a member. Non-members can apply for a grant and then join at: www.wssra.org Click on the membership tab.
6. Applications are due by November 8, 2024.
7. Recipients will be notified through an email. If possible, the award will be presented at a faculty meeting.

Note: If you like to fill out forms one can be found at <https://sno-islesra.info/learning-support>

A mini-grant committee will read the applications and determine the recipients.

Sno-Isle 22 is an affiliate unit of the Washington State School Retirees' Association (based in Lacey, Washington) which has a statewide membership of 17,000. Our purpose is to improve pensions and health care benefits for retired educators. We also offer mini-grants to Snohomish and Island County educators, and provide scholarships to high school seniors interested in a career in education. Please request a membership application and consider joining our association. Dues are \$7 per month and are primarily directed to legislative advocacy regarding pensions and health care benefits.

Learn more at: www.wssra.org Enrollment information can be found under the " Membership " tab.

President's Message

Welcome!

We hope you have enjoyed the summer months. Many of our members will be returning to classrooms but even for our retired members the start of the school year probably brings a change of routine from summer. As we start a new year I'm happy to report that our local unit is healthy financially. Even during the years of the pandemic, with limited meetings, our local Snohomish County unit membership has stayed the same - just around 1,000 members. Each year since Covid we've tried to do a little more to return to a normal schedule. This year we plan to have seven events. We've picked the dates so you can mark your calendar (See back of newsletter). We are still in the process of planning all the meetings but there are some to look forward to such as our welcome back pizza party, the holiday luncheon, scholarship tea, and a special presentation by astronaut and teacher Dottie Metcalf-Lindenburger.

Hope you can attend some if not all of the meetings this year. If you're interested in becoming more involved in our unit there's always a need. We need readers for the mini grants, and also readers for our unit's scholarship. Our membership and legislative committees are always looking for new members. Plus we're always looking for new faces and ideas on the board. Here's to a great new year for both our retirees and those still active in schools.

Ken Harvey

President, Unit 22

Invite a friend to join and enjoy a coffee on us!

Have your friend enroll at www.wssra.org. Enrollment information can be found under the "Membership" tab. It's easy to join. Once your friend has joined let us know at: kenwes55@comcast.net and we will send you two \$10 Starbucks cards.

Since you probably have more than one friend you can refer as many as you like.

Friendship pays off.

Don't Fall For It

I would guess the majority of those reading this article keep some type of calendar. Most likely it has appointments and other dates to remember. I would wager, though, that you don't have 'take a fall' marked on any of your upcoming dates. That's the thing about accidents, we don't plan them but we can take steps to cut down the chances of having one.

The statistics are a warning to take steps to lessen the chance of taking a fall. According to the CDC, each year 3 million older people are treated in emergency departments for fall related injuries. Also, over 800,000 patients a year are hospitalized because of a fall injury, most often because of a head injury or hip fracture.

Fall prevention includes a number of things to look at. They include but are not limited to looking for tripping hazards, eyesight, footwear, medications and hearing loss.

There are tons of checklists available both on the internet and in print. The CDC and AARP have good ones but a Google search of 'fall prevention checklist' turns up lots of results.

Each list is unique but there seems to be some common items:

- * Remove small throw rugs or use double-sided tape to keep the rugs from slipping.
- * Keep items you use often in cabinets you can reach easily without using a step stool.
- * Move things you can trip over from stairs and places where you walk.

Basically, a home checklist allows you to look at where you live with a fresh set of eyes! Speaking of eyes and eyesight, be sure to have yours checked regularly. Poor eyesight is certainly a factor in a surprising number of falls. In addition, an eye exam can help identify other health issues such as diabetes.

So you've fallen in love with a new pair of beautiful shoes. Make sure that's the only fall you take. Suggestions for shoe safety include avoiding high heels and choosing soles that prevent slipping and have a lot of contact with the ground. Also, avoid a loose fit. Look for shoes that have laces, Velcro or a zipper. Try shoes on in the store but also walk around your house when you get home to make sure they support good balance. A specialty shoe store can help in choosing the right shoe for a foot related problem such as neuropathy. Shoes with the toe cap curving up are a good choice to prevent stumbling. One last word on footwear—over 50% of those that reported a fall at home were wearing socks or slippers.

Hearing loss can make a fall more likely. Research by the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders found that for every 25dB of hearing loss the chances of a fall go up incrementally. Hearing loss can affect balance especially for people diagnosed with tinnitus or Meniere's disease. Also, with hearing loss, the brain works harder to understand and might not work as hard helping you pay attention to your steps.

There are many exercises that help with balance but that can be another topic. No matter what your age, falls are not fun and can change the trajectory of your life! Take care!

**SNO-ISLE
WSSRA UNIT #22**

10715 Birch Drive NW
Marysville WA 98271

**RETURN SERVICE
REQUESTED**



2024-25 Sno-Isle Board

PRESIDENT

Ken Harvey

VICE PRESIDENT

Marianne Harvey (retiring after this year)

SECRETARY

Open

TREASURER

Joan Pennewell (retiring after this year)

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Membership—Open

Scholarships—Liz Meisner

Legislative—Tim Knopf

FB/Website—Ken Harvey

Newsletter—David Davis

Health—Open

Friendship—Brenda Leider, Sue Rookaird, Anne Spence

STATE REPRESENTATIVES

Legislative Committee—Tim Knopf

District 1 Representative—Ken Harvey

UPCOMING DATES

September 24—Welcome Back Pizza Party

October 22—TBA

December 3 or 10—Holiday Luncheon

February 18—Dottie Metcalf-Lindenburger (Former NASA astronaut)

March 18—TBA

April 15—TBA

May 20—Scholarship Tea

June 2-4—2025 78th Annual WSSRA Convention in Yakima