



President's Message

Happy Summer!

The chapter is still planning a gathering for retirees for this year, probably east of the Cascades. If you're interested in joining us, let us know! We are also starting discussion about next year's Biennial Meeting of the Retiree Chapter – more information to come. We will have officer elections and consider important business of the Chapter, so your attendance is very welcome!

I am still keeping very busy in my garden with the nicer weather. This is a reminder to let us know what you're up to. We would love to share with other retirees and help keep people connected!

Thank you all for that you do!

In solidarity,

Merrilee Miron

What's Happening In The Legislative Realm

By Jim Howe, Director

I continue to hear that AFT Washington President Karen Strickland's speech at the March 6th Rally in Olympia was well received by our progressive activist allies, and made a strong case for Labor to support Universal Healthcare. We are hoping to get permission to put the video on our website – check back to see it.

Along with PSARA and NAACP members of HeathCare is a Human Right (HCHR), I've been working to help jumpstart the "Labor Dialog" about Universal Healthcare that the Washington State Labor Council called for in a 2022 Resolution, but hasn't prioritized it yet. We have meetings with the largest Washington unions and the MLK Central Labor Council, and hope to get a workgroup together soon.

I'd also like to highlight that the Public Employees Benefits Board's decision to add the cost-saving Part D drug coverage to UMP Classic (traditional Medicare) was a DIRECT result of our work with the Medicare Stakeholders

Coalition. Both AFT Washington and the Retirees have signed on in support of the Expanded Apple Care for immigrants, and improvements in the way the Health Care Authority administers the program.

HCHR is planning organized opposition to the three harmful and reactionary initiatives on the WA November ballot. AFT Washington has supported all three of the No campaigns, and we are taking advantage of PSARA's particular work on the Long Term Care Act repeal.

AFT Washington's Legislative Affairs Committee is proposing a 2025 Agenda that continues to support gun violence legislation from the Alliance for Gun Responsibility, to make our schools and workplaces safer, and cost-free college legislation from Communities For Our Colleges, among other priorities. The committee is also supporting the push for a PERS/TRS 1 permanent COLA.



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Update On Our Resolution Work

By Richard Burton, State Affiliate Political Organizer

In the last issue of the *Spotlight*, we gave an update on the plans for the retiree organizing resolution, passed unanimously at the convention in May of 2023. Since then, we've met some of the goals laid out there.

- In April, the Retiree Chapter hosted two gatherings, one in CD 6 (Tacoma) and one in CD 7 (Seattle).
- At the CD 6 event, a candidate forum held at Tacoma Community College and hosted jointly with WFSE, Hilary Franz and Emily Randall, who are both running for the congressional seat being vacated by Derek Kilmer, took questions from the audience. The event was great, and we made contact with a number of retirees who want to get more active in the chapter.
- At the CD 7 event, held the same day at South Seattle College, Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal made prepared remarks, including the topics of Social Security and Medicare. She also took questions from the audience. In addition to the nine retirees in attendance, there were also student activists, and members of the classified staff (WFSE 304), professional staff (AFT 6550), and faculty (AFT 1789) unions present.

We have one more event to schedule. We are still looking at good options for retiree members, particularly east of the Cascades – let me know if you are interested in joining us!

Our organizing committees are going strong! Currently, we have teams established in Pierce County, Seattle, and Mountlake Terrace. There is also a team engaging on student voter expansion for the fall elections – if you attended last year's Biennial Meeting, you know that voter registration is an important part of voter outreach, particularly to youth voters.

In June, we also debuted a new and improved Retirement Workshop. Several of the Seattle Organizing Committee members want to use their connections at their respective colleges and partner with the Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors to provide guidance to members who are nearing retirement. The organizing committee is looking for more opportunities to share this workshop – reach out if you think there'd be interest in such a workshop at your college!

We are still looking at those long term plans I mentioned in the last issue. Some of them are in progress, but here's our current list of events you could definitely make a difference by getting involved in.

- Supporting locals with their contract or issue campaigns
- Supporting locals in membership recruitment, including at new employee orientations
- Helping AFT Washington-endorsed candidates with electoral campaign work
- Helping local unions to welcome members who have recently joined the union
- Putting on student debt clinics for members struggling with loan payments
- Joining in advocacy and lobbying meetings with state and local elected officials
- Tutoring students

Are you interested in helping us build and organize our retiree chapter? Please contact Richard Burton for more information: rburton@aftwa.org; Cell: (425) 738-8900.