Together We Count

By Toni Gumeringer, NDU-Retired Advisory Board  Southwest Member

As my fellow retirees, I know how much you care for public education and public service in North Dakota. Throughout my career in education, everything I did in the classroom and as a member and leader of my local association was for the ultimate benefit of students and their families. As a result of my 26 years spent in the classroom, I earned a secure retirement through the Teachers Fund for Retirement. That retirement security is now under attack.

The 2021 North Dakota legislature gave a clear directive: close the ND Public Employee Retirement System's defined benefit pension. If the 2023 ND legislature is successful in dismantling the PERS defined benefit, TFFR is next on the chopping block. The time to act is NOW!

I am writing to encourage you to join me and register for North Dakota United’s 2023 Lobby Day at the State Capitol on President’s Day, February 20th 2023, with a training session held the evening before. Meals, mileage, and one night’s lodging are provided.

It is time to use our collective voice! Full information can be found on the next page. Please scan the QR code with your phone to register and contact ali.hoffman@ndunited.org or 701-223-0450 for more information.

NDU-Retired Advisory Board Opportunities

Elections for three positions on the NDU-Retired Advisory Board will be held during the NDU Delegate Assembly scheduled for April 15, 2023 in Bismarck.

The slots open on the NDU-Retired Advisory Board are:
- President
- North East Member
- North West Member

Candidates for NDU-Retired offices must notify NDU by March 15, 2023 of their intent to run for office.

If you are interested in running for one of these positions, please contact Sarah Keiser at 701-223-0450 or sarah.keiser@ndunited.org.
LOBBY DAY
February 20, 2023, President’s Day

Join fellow NDU members for a day of action as we meet with legislators and make sure they know what matters to educators and public employees!

PROGRAM

Sunday, February 19th – Training
Radisson Hotel 4 – 8 pm
- Overview of the NDU legislative agenda and 2023 legislative session
- Lobby Day logistics and game plan

Monday, February 20th – Lobby Day
Heritage Center & Capitol 8:30 am – 4 pm
- Preparatory work and team building
- Attend committee hearings
- Meet with legislators
- Floor session

NDU LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

- Promote increased funding for equitable salary increases for all education and public employees.
- Preserve defined benefit retirement plans for current and future education and public employees.
- Ensure that public money supports only public institutions and that only public employees provide public services.
- Ensure that North Dakota makes a long and lasting investment in quality pre-k and child care that pays particular attention to the workers providing these services to set our kids up for success in school and ease the burdens on working families.
Postcard campaigns are a tried and true advocacy tool used for decades throughout all types of organizations to inform elected officials of issues close to our members' hearts and minds.

North Dakota United will be launching a postcard campaign this legislative session where you will receive blank postcards to fill out for your elected state legislators. Talking points and information on how to return your completed postcards will be included.

At the time of publication, we are still waiting to see which specific bills and issues the postcards will address, but we suspect retirement security, salaries, school funding, and more will need to be addressed.

Please be on the lookout for blank postcards to reach your mailbox in early 2023.

Contact Sarah Keiser at sarah.keiser@ndunited.org or 701.223.0450 for more information.

The North Dakota United Foundation is excited to again participate in Giving Hearts Day, an annual 24-hour online fundraising event. By donating to the Foundation on Giving Hearts Day, you promote excellence in education and public service through thirteen grants and scholarships available to North Dakota United members, including Student NDU and NDU-Retired members, as well as the dependents of all members.

Thanks in part to your donations, in 2022 the NDU Foundation announced that 35 North Dakota United members and dependents had been selected to receive more than $35,000 total in scholarships and grants.

Pre-giving is available January 2nd - February 7th for those who wish to donate early.

Mark your calendar and be sure to donate on February 9th at GivingHeartsDay.org!
I am sure you all are familiar with the fable about Chicken Little who constantly screamed: “The sky is falling… the sky is falling!” Or how about the renowned story about Peter and the Wolf who also was forever saying: “Wolf… Wolf… Wolf.”

NDU and NDU-Retired are NOT crying “Wolf Wolf “and we are not crying “the sky is falling” BUT we are saying “TIME TO GATHER OUR FORCES” and let the legislature know that we are not going to stand by and allow them to take away Public Employees’ defined retirement benefits!

- NDPERS may only be their first target, which means other pensions like TFFR for North Dakota’s teachers could soon be under attack.
- The current state employee defined benefit pension plan, ensures stable lifetime monthly payments based on salary and years of service. An interim legislative committee is working on a plan to move new employees to a cheaper, lower benefit defined contribution plan, where the only guarantee will be what is contributed. For those employees, there will be no guarantees as to what will be available to them upon retirement.

I strongly urge all our members to help us stop this movement. “How” you ask? Several ways:
1. When you receive your plea to send postcards to your legislators, whip out that pen and send them.
2. Plan on attending Lobby Day on Feb. 20

WE MUST IN A LOUD CLEAR UNITED VOICE MAKE SURE THEY KNOW WHAT MATTERS TO RETIRED AND CURRENT EDUCATORS AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES.

Information on how to register is in this newsletter. I strongly urge you to plan on showing our unified voices! Remember: “Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much!”

In Solidarity…

Retired & Energized

By Karen Askerooth, NDU-Retired President

301 N. 4th Street
Bismarck ND 58503
701.223.0450
ndunited.org

United Voices for
NDU-Retired
Issue 10 August 2022