



Background for ESP Legislative Activity

Currently via its Legislative/Benefits Review Committee Chair, ESP is one of 20 annuitant organizations represented in the Wisconsin Coalition of Annuitants (WCOA). The WCOA was organized in 1991 through activities of the Wisconsin Retired Educator Association's Insurance Committee, chaired by Truman Graf of UW-Extension, Cooperative Extension and Wilson Thiede of UW-System Administration. Robert Alesch of UW-System Member Benefits also was active in recruiting interested organizations and served as its first President.

Purpose

In multi-organizational form, the Coalition magnifies many of the core interests of ESP's Legislative/Benefits Review Committee. WCOA consists of organizations representing retirees in the Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS), both statewide and regional, and may include active as well as retired participants in the system. It exists to represent all retirees in WRS, which total more than 130,000, as well as more than 132,000 inactive participants including current employees. Its purpose is to provide a forum and a mechanism to bring organizations together to:

- 1) Share information on state and federal legislative proposals and other data of interest to annuitants;
- 2) Discuss and actively pursue issues and problems impacting on WRS annuitants;
- 3) Promote maintaining political and fiscal integrity of the WRS, encouraging and promoting continued efficiency; and
- 4) Monitor the activities of the Employee Trust Fund (ETF) Board.

Issues and Goals

WCOA is committed to striving for the most efficient and effective operation of the State of Wisconsin Investment Board, that is free of political interference in policy and investment decisions as well as assuring that ETF obtains necessary resources to provide timely service to all active employees and all retired annuitants in WRS.

Through the 15 years of Coalition existence, ESP has been represented by Truman Graf, Richard Vilstrup, Gayle Worf, and presently Dwayne Rohweder.

Your Legislative/Benefits Review Committee will strive to have an annuitant column in each Wisconsin ESP newsletter, and will explore establishing an "Alert" network to inform ESP Members of relevant legislative matters. For more information, please feel free to contact Dwayne at darohwed@wisc.edu.