



Retired Public Employees of Alaska, APEA/AFT

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October 21, 2017

The Honorable Bill Walker
Governor
3rd Floor, State Capitol
PO Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811

The Honorable Leslie Ridle
Commissioner of Administration
10th Floor, State Office Building
PO Box 110200
Juneau, AK 99811

Re: Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board/AO 288

Dear Governor Walker and Commissioner Ridle:

The Retired Public Employees of Alaska (RPEA), an association representing all PERS, TRS and JRS members, acknowledges promulgation of AO 288 and creation of the Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board. We sincerely hope that this Board, which took 4 years to create, proves worthwhile and helpful both to the administration as well as to the represented retirees. As requested under the AO, RPEA will soon participate in the submission of candidates for the two seats which will call for lists of candidates from retiree organizations. We will also propose names to you for placement on other seats as well. Certainly, we hope that you will carefully consider these proposals.

Participation in the creation of the Board's panel and, quite frankly, participation in the open meetings envisioned for the Board, does not mean we at RPEA agree with the details of the Board's formulation. RPEA was originator of the proposal and the form it proposed, and the focus of issues for that Board has certainly not been fully reflected in AO 288.

We have grave reservations about a number of issues which the AO raises:

First, while we presume that each of you has the best interests of the constituents (that is, the beneficiaries and the employers) in mind, the retained authority to potentially select appointees regardless of input from the retiree organizations is worrisome. Only two positions (rather than more as proposed by RPEA) are to be picked from lists submitted by retiree groups and even that characteristic can be overridden by the governor.

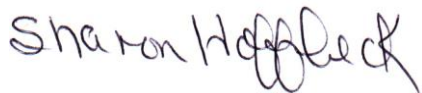
Second, we had proposed a number of focus areas for the Board and much of those details have been eliminated and replaced by broad categories. The breadth of the categories in our opinion offers the opportunities for discussion on many fronts, but we believe the specified focus offered a better deliberative agenda for the Board.

Third, we believe elimination of honoraria is disrespectful to the value of the volunteer members of the Board, and the modest cost savings are penny-wise and pound foolish.

Fourth, we believe inclusion of a sunset provision carries negative connotations; because a governor can always unilaterally revise, repeal or issue an AO, a sunset provision is unnecessary.

Thank you for your attention.

Respectfully,



Sharon Hoffbeck
President
Retired Public Employees of Alaska



Brad Owens
Executive Vice President