

Vote for Cindy Spanyers Legislative Information Director

In 2005, the Alaska Legislature closed the entire PERS/TRS Defined Benefit Retirement Systems to all new public employees and teachers hired after July 1, 2006. Proponents of the plan argued that it would “stop the bleeding” and help the systems recover. The new law backfired. The unfunded liability surged ahead every year for several reasons: miscalculations from the actuary, Mercer; the severe market downturn of 2008; and having a closed system.

Since then, the legislature has passed measures to maintain PERS/TRS and protect current and future retirees. Unfortunately, their good-faith efforts haven't been quite enough and the unfunded liability is growing again to the point where it totals roughly seven percent of the operating budget. Our current budget constraints pose serious future challenges as the Legislature and Administration look at cost saving measures. It is critical for us to be vigilant.

Here's How I Can Help

Skills:

- Excellent network with current and former lawmakers as well as unions and related organizations
- Thorough understanding of how the Alaska Legislature operates
- Ability to assess legislative situation, help translate into needed action plans, and advise RPEA on steps required

Background:

- For more than sixteen years, I worked for APEA/AFT as the Legislative Liaison until my retirement in late 2019. In addition to providing information to members, elected officials, and candidates on PERS and TRS, I was able to partake in numerous seminars and trainings on Defined Benefits and pensions.
- This included attending conferences sponsored by the National Conference of State Legislators and the National Institute of retirement security, becoming well versed on the issues.
- Through my work with the Fairbanks Central Labor Council and as legislative staff for the Interior Delegation in the 1980's, I am very familiar with the legislative process, research, and historical context.
- I am proud of my advocacy for working families – and our earned pensions – throughout most of my career, which includes working as a Business Agent for ASEA/AFSCME Local 52.

- I am a Tier 1 employee after working as an emergency dispatcher for the Fairbanks Police Department and UAF Safety and Security. In addition, my employment with KUAC FM/TV and the Division of Wage and Hour in the Department of Labor contributed to my PERS pension.

Current Community Service:

- Personnel Board, City and Borough of Juneau
- Shepherd of the Valley Food Pantry, bagging and delivering food throughout the pandemic
- Sons of Norway, Board Member, Svalbard Chapter
- Member, IBEW Local 1547, Laborer's #341, and AFSCME Local 52R

Family and Education

- I earned my degree from UAF in Political Science.
- My husband, Ed Flanagan, served as Commissioner of Labor and has served on our local school board. After moving from Fairbanks, we've lived in Juneau since 1992.
- Our son is a proud graduate of Juneau Douglas High School and currently works for the University of British Columbia.

Endorsements:

*"I first came to know Cindy as the political director of the Fairbanks Central Labor Council in the 1980's. Her insight into the electoral and legislative process was significant. During my 16 years in the legislature I continued to seek her insights into the nuances of the legislative process. She is an invaluable asset to the RPEA."*__Retired Representative David Guttenberg, RPEA member

*"Cindy Spanyers and I have been colleagues for two decades when she was working as the APEA [our parent organization] Legislative Liaison and most recently as RPEA Director of Legislative Information, and I have spent numerous hours each year working closely with her. I have observed Cindy working with Legislators & their staffs, Board members of RPEA, APEA, EPIC and many other partners in our work, and I can say without hesitation we could not find a more effective RPEA member to serve our membership. She is held in high esteem by all whom have worked with her."*__Sam Trivette, Former Vice Chair of the Alaska Retirement Management Board and former RPEA President

*"I cannot think of anyone better qualified than Cindy."*__Retired Senator Berta Gardner, RPEA member

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