

Oregon Citizens Lobby

A growing statewide collaborative effort by citizens to promote legislative accountability.

March 28, 2013

Oregon Legislators,

Oregon Citizens Lobby is greatly concerned with the Oregon Legislature's lack of willingness to broach true PERS reform that is so desperately needed throughout Oregon. Not only is the State of Oregon budget being greatly impacted, but multiple local governments and school districts are in need of reforms in order to balance their budgets.

On Thursday, March 28 SB 822 is being heard. However, this is a dismal attempt to reform PERS and does little to truly get at the core set of issues that need to be addressed to permanently achieve reforms that will set PERS on a path to fiscal balance. Facing unfunded liabilities of \$14 billion, SB 822 only cuts \$455 million a biennium and kicks another \$350 million of liabilities down the road to 2015. Even Governor Kitzhaber has proposed larger cuts to PERS.

It is time to get serious about PERS reform and put Oregon back on a fiscally responsible path. We recommend starting today by allowing a hearing on SB 754 sponsored by Senator Knopp and Representative Sprenger. Currently, this is the best option that has been introduced in this legislative session. It has a potential savings of greater than \$1 billion, addresses many critically needed PERS reform and has the greatest potential to withstand legal challenges. If signed into law this bill would provide significant revenues that could be invested back into our children's education without increasing taxes on property owners and small businesses. This would allow our state to meet the needs of our children without impacting Oregon's economy that is still suffering from an excruciatingly slow economic recovery.

Oregon Citizens Lobby respectfully requests that you take the politics out of the PERS discussion and get down to truly reforming our broken PERS system today.