

ROSE Newsletter

Retired Oregon School Employees



Looking out for the rights and benefits of retired OSEA members

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Benefits of being a ROSE (Retired Oregon School Employees) member include OSEA life insurance, member discounts, OSEA publications, PERS information, training, events and social activities.

Do Your Elected Representatives Vote to Protect Seniors?

The election is over and Joe Biden has been installed as President of the United States. It was a little rocky but the Constitution prevailed. It seems now more than ever politics has an increasing role in our lives.

My friend Jason asked me a question the other day: "Why does it seem like unions lean more to the Democratic Party and not the Republican Party?" Jason said he sees more OSEA endorsements for democratic candidates. Similarly, the AARP seems to write articles about pensions, Social Security and Medicare, and often endorse democratic candidates. He thought there should be more balanced articles in the newsletters.

I had an easy answer for him: OSEA only endorses candidates on issues related to education and labor. OSEA does not take a stand on issues that do not directly affect education or labor. The AARP is similar; they make their endorsements based on how a policy will affect seniors' lives, especially regarding Medicare, Social



By **BONNIE LUISI**
Chair

Security, pension protection and health care.

To demonstrate this to Jason, I asked him if he knew how his representatives voted on Social Security, Medicare, pensions and other issues that are important to seniors. He didn't know.

I'll share a little information that I also shared with Jason. The Alliance of Retired Americans (ARA) tracks those votes, and you can look up your representatives' voting record. Jason was shocked when he saw the actual records, showing a definite difference between the parties as far as issues that affect seniors the most.

The ARA also tracks issues like lowering prescription drug prices, senior scam protection, pension protections, preserving senior programs and disaster relief. Oregon's Senators, Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley (both democrats) score 100 percent in protecting senior issues.

Our representatives voted on the same

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Joy, Hope and Good Spirits

By **MERLENE MARTIN**
Vice Chair

At the last ROSE Zoom meeting, I asked everyone to share what gives them joy and hope during this difficult time. We all agreed Zoom gatherings with family and friends are really important. Seeing the faces of those we love, care about and respect brings great joy. It can be bittersweet as we think about how long it's been since we have shared an in-person hug, but the goodness outweighs the sadness for sure! Here are some other ways ROSE members and leadership are finding joy.

Chair Bonnie Luisi shared, "One of the ways I find to help me stay positive is to celebrate the things that go right every day. After a while, you find yourself aware that there are more good things that happen every day. It works for me, anyhow."

Zone VI Coordinator Linda Bradetich said, "I wake up every morning, put my feet on the ground and say that I am grateful. My faith in God is what gets me through each day and my two dogs give me great joy. My husband isn't bad, either."

Paula Kingsbury, Zone I coordinator, had a cheerful response: "What makes my day is when I can drive through Dutch Bros coffee for an iced latte, drive through Pacific Grind for a BLT and take it to Siletz Bay Park and sit in my car and enjoy the view! Somehow the sounds and smell of the ocean make everything seem ok."

Zone VII Coordinator Delores

Piersol shared, "My most favorite joy is spending a lot of time with my grandsons. I watch them three to four days a week."

Member Susan Hardy said, "Walking my dog, Dash, in the morning and breathing the fresh, cool air. Waving to neighbors as they walk their dogs, too."

Everice Moro, Zone II coordinator, reminded us, "Joy comes from many directions inside and outside of ourselves. So grab it when you see it and appreciate it. Be joyful about loving someone wherever they are."

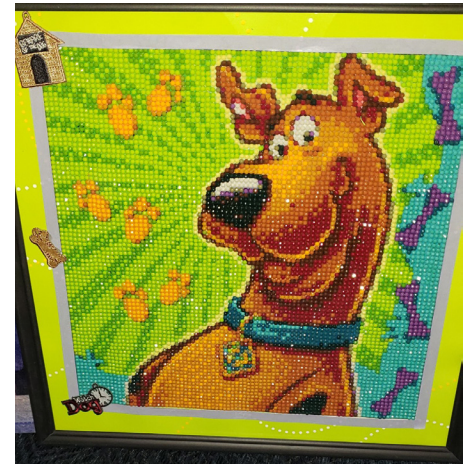
Zone III Coordinator Stephanie Heins-Mueller simply said, "My grandchildren, the sunrise and the sunset at the beach bring me joy."

Member Jay Osborne chuckled and said, "With four generations of family sharing my home, there is never a dull moment. My great-granddaughter is 10 months old. She is just starting to walk. At 76 years of age, I relax while enjoying all the activity."

Kathryn Reigger, our Zone V coordinator, admitted, "It can be a challenge to maintain a sense of hope with the expectation that good will come soon. It is really hard to be hopeful but still, I try to stay optimistic and work on what I can do now, by looking for joy to lift my spirits. Working on small projects; taking walks for exercise; reading and remembering to smile."

Meanwhile, Zone IV Coordinator Marilyn Moss stays very busy in her joy. "I have been doing 5D diamond paintings. I have

done about 40 of them since June." She shared this photo of one of her diamond paintings:



As for myself, I go out on my deck, observe and listen. Joy and peace surround me as the birds chirping and enjoying the suet feeder, the hummingbirds hovering above their feeders and using their incredibly long tongues to retrieve nectar, the squirrels leaping among trees. To remind me I do have neighbors, the chickens cackle as they scratch beneath the surface for tasty morsels of food.

I hope a few of these thoughts resonate with you and bring you joy, hope and peace as you read.

Thank You, Marie!

Because of health issues, Marie Wolfe has stepped down as ROSE Secretary/Treasurer. Marie says it was a hard decision, but she hopes to get better and come back to ROSE at some point in the future. We all want to say thank you to Marie for her efforts and wish her the best.

– *Bonnie Luisi, Chair*

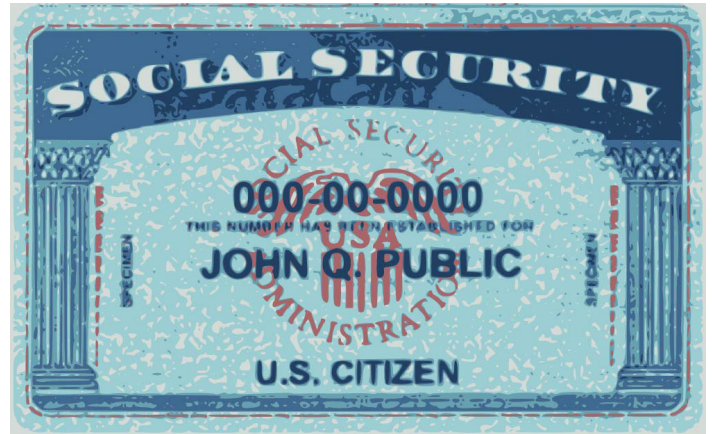
Highest Earners Already Paid Their Social Security Taxes for the Year

From ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS

The cap on earnings subject to Social Security payroll tax is \$142,800 in 2021, and 4,000 people who earn more than \$10 million per year paid their Social Security tax for the year by Jan. 4.

According to *Barrons*, taxing earnings above \$400,000 would boost Social Security revenue by seven percent and would then gradually increase revenue enough to keep the Social Security Trust Fund solvent until 2040. About 5.4 percent of workers earn more than the Social Security cap.

“Raising the Social Security earnings cap would go a long way toward eliminating elderly poverty in the nation,” said Joseph Peters, Jr., Secretary-Treasurer of the



Alliance for Retired Americans. “It remains outrageous that workers earning hourly wages pay a much higher percentage of their income into Social Security than millionaires and billionaires.

OPRI Safeguards PERS Through the 2021 Legislative Session

By JAY OSBORNE

Oregon PERS Retirees, Inc.
Chair

Each legislative session, Oregon PERS Retirees, Inc. (OPRI) monitors all bills which are relevant to Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) retirees. This year, Jan. 11 was the informal start to the legislative session. Legislators were sworn in and bills were introduced for the first time. Here is an overview of what we expect to accomplish during the 2021 session, which may last up to 160 days because it is an odd-numbered year.

The Public Affairs Counsel (PAC) will work through all the

bills that are being introduced and alert OPRI on which relevant bills we need to track. So far, 1,900 bills have already been introduced and another 1,000 are expected. PAC is reading, analyzing and determining which bills touch OPRI and retiree issues. The fact that hard copies of the bills are not available makes this task a little more difficult.

As usual, the OPRI Board and our legislative action committee will discuss the bills that are of importance to our issues at our board meetings, which are held on the third Monday of each month. (Note: All meetings are currently held via Zoom.) We will provide feedback to PAC and prioritize bills according to their importance to

PERS and retirement concerns.

There are indications that budgets won't be addressed until later in the session due to uncertainty around revenue and potential federal aid packages. It appears there will be more standing committees meeting a little less frequently than usual. Although there are no bill limits this session, there will be more prioritization and likely fewer bills being considered. It is estimated that 20 percent of the bills that have been introduced are empty “placeholder” bills, which is an unfortunate practice. We will continue to monitor bills which impact retirees and share more information in this space as the session progresses.

ROSE Recipe: Mini Chocolate Soufflés



This recipe is adapted from one by Martha Stewart. It would make a wonderful treat for Valentine's Day. I hope you enjoy it as much as I do!

Ingredients:

2 tbsp. unsalted butter, room temperature
1/3 cup granulated sugar, plus

more for ramekins
3 large eggs, separated, at room temperature
1/8 tsp. cream of tartar
5 1/2 oz. buttersweet chocolate, melted
2/3 cup whole milk
1 tbsp. + 1 1/2 tsp. cornstarch
1/8 tsp. salt
3 tbsp. crème fraiche or sour cream

Preheat oven to 400°. Brush four 7-oz. ramekins generously with butter, then coat with sugar. Whisk egg whites with a mixer until frothy, about two minutes. Add cream of tartar and whisk until soft peaks form. Add sugar; whisk

until medium peaks form, about 5 minutes.

Set chocolate in a bowl. In a saucepan, whisk milk into corn starch and salt. Bring to a simmer. Cook, stirring until thick, about one to two minutes. Whisk into chocolate (mixture will separate). Whisk in yolks and crème fraiche. Gently fold in egg whites.

Fill ramekins evenly with batter. Bake on a baking sheet, rotating halfway through, until soufflés rise but centers are still liquid, about 14 minutes. Dust with confectioner's sugar and serve with a dollop of ice cream or sweetened whipped cream.

– *Everice Moro*

ROSE Calendar

Feb. 9 – ROSE meeting (*Watch your email for an invitation to join us on Zoom!*)

Feb. 15 – Presidents Day

Feb. 25 – OSEA Board meeting

Feb. 27 – OSEA All Committee Day

March 9 – ROSE meeting

A Member's Union
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issues. Here are their scores:

Bonamici (D) - 100 percent

Walden (R) - 30 percent

Blumenauer (D) - 90 percent

DeFazio (D) - 100 percent

Schrader (D) - 80 percent

As you can see, the four democartic representatives' voting records received a grade of at least 80 percent or higher from the ARA. Our lone republican, Walden, scored only 30 percent when it came to protecting seniors and our issues. That is a big difference.

When it comes to Social Security, Medicare, prescription drug costs, etc., it makes no difference if you are a republican or a democrat. These issues all affect seniors and should be bipartisan. If you have a republican representative, please write them and make sure they know how important your pension, Medicare, Social Security and healthcare are. They need to hear from you.

I hope this helps you understand the process and gives you something to think about. If you would like to see how our elected officials voted on each issue, go to www.retiredamericans.org/voting-record. Scroll down and select Oregon.