

From: [Smolen, Jennifer](#)
To: [Office State Actuary, WA](#)
Cc: [Rolfes, Sen. Christine](#)
Subject: Letter from Senator Christine Rolfes to SCPP
Date: Friday, October 14, 2022 4:25:23 PM
Attachments: [2022-10_SCPP_eligibilitywindow.pdf](#)

Dear OSA:

Attached please find letter from Senator Rolfes to SCPP.

Thank you,
Jennifer

Jennifer Smolen
Executive Legislative Assistant
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Office of Washington State Senator Christine Rolfes
23rd Legislative District: Kitsap County communities of Hansville, Kingston, Poulsbo, Bainbridge Island, Keyport, Silverdale, and East Bremerton
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Washington State Senate

Senator Christine Rolfes
23rd Legislative District

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October 14, 2022

Select Committee on Pension Policy
c/o Washington State Office of the State Actuary
P.O. Box 40914
Olympia, WA 98504-0914

Dear Chair Conway and SCPP Members:

Thank you for your critical work on individual pensions earned by state employees, and so many other important policy areas. I am writing today regarding an issue experienced by one of my constituents, and which I fear other state residents have experienced over the years. I strongly believe this issue deserves further research and review and I welcome your input before moving ahead with possible legislation.

Over recent weeks my office has worked with a constituent who served three decades as a K-12 educator. She retired and opted to begin drawing on her pension but intended to wait until her spouse retired a couple years later to make use of her health care benefits. She embarked on a journey of gathering retirement guidance in advance of her proposed retirement date, including documented meetings with DRS in Olympia. Despite her due diligence, she was never told about the benefit deferral form that was required to preserve future eligibility for her healthcare benefits. Because she did not know about this step, the form was not submitted by the 60-day deadline, thereby rendering her permanently ineligible for retiree health insurance. She only discovered her ineligibility when she tried to apply for the benefit this year.

It is imperative that retirement guidance, and the processes in place, are implemented in a fair and dependable manner. Our state must provide the necessary information for public servants to access their hard-earned retirement benefits. Constituents across the state, through no fault of their own, are being excluded from a program they earned and planned on having. From their perspective, that loss of benefits is at the hands of Washington State.

For all these reasons I am considering introducing a bill next session. The aim would be to prevent this kind of unnecessary exclusion moving forward, and to also help resolve some cases retroactively if possible. I would appreciate SCPP's input on this policy issue of public retiree application process and eligibility window for PEBB/SEBB, before next session if possible. Thank you in advance for your review.

Sincerely,

Christine Rolfes
Senator, 23rd Legislative District