

HOUSE SENDS HARSH MESSAGE TO IDAHO STATE RETIREES: NO COLA

As Cost for the Basics Soar for Older Idahoans, AARP Opposes Bill to Deny 1% COLA for State Retirees – Could Hit State Economy Hard

BOISE, Idaho – In a historic move that could result in a crisis for older Idahoans, the Idaho House passed a measure (HCR 42) to block a modest 1% cost of living adjustment (COLA) for 33,000 state retirees. AARP strongly opposes the measure and is urging the Senate to reject it. The legislation is the first time state lawmakers have moved to block a recommendation from the Public Employees Retirement System board.

“This legislation says the state of Idaho does not value its retirees – that’s a bad message for both retirees and state employees,” said Jim Wordelman, State Director for AARP in Idaho. “Older Idahoans are among the hardest hit by the economic downturn, and while 1% doesn’t seem like much, for some retirees, it’s the difference between filling a grocery cart and a prescription.”

A nationwide AARP survey found 55% of older Americans already have difficulty paying for the basics such as food and medicine, while 44% said they had trouble affording their utility bills.

The COLA will not cost the state of Idaho any revenue; rather, it’s already in the Public Employee Retirement System of Idaho – which has been rated as one of the strongest state retirement funds in the nation.

AARP is encouraging all state retirees, AARP members and the public to call their State Senators toll-free at 1-800-626-0471 and urge them to vote against the bill.

“The loss of a COLA will mean more Idaho retirees are forced to struggle in their golden years – We’re calling on Idaho Senators to take a stand and do what’s right for people who gave so much to the state,” added Wordelman.

Economic Impact on Idaho by county

The legislation also serves to have a serious impact on state and local economies, as every dollar paid out in benefits is estimated to generate \$2.36 in economic impact. So the \$4.28 million COLA could pour up to \$10.1 million back into state and local economies. The impact will be felt in every county across the state.

County	# of State Retirees	1% COLA	Loss to local economy
Ada	6,241	\$1.19 million	\$2.8 million
Adams	100	\$13,610	\$30,758
Bannock	1,822	\$331,016	\$781,197
Bear Lake	96	\$9,175	\$21,653

Benewah	206	\$25,372	\$59,877.92
Bingham	971	\$136,446	\$322,012
Blain	224	\$35,668	\$84,176
Boise	148	\$21,538	\$50,829
Bonner	497	\$67,090	\$158,332
Bonneville	1,584	\$253,654	\$598,623
Boundary	183	\$20,930	\$49,394
Butte	55	\$5,970	\$14,089
Camas	37	\$5,934	\$14,004
Canyon	2,372	\$349,351	\$824,468
Caribou	200	\$23,681	\$55,870
Cassia	761	\$102,680	\$242,324
Clark	35	\$3,679	\$8,682
Clearwater	294	\$38,669	\$91,258
Custer	93	\$12,260	\$28,933
Elmore	456	\$66,095	\$155,984
Franklin	225	\$29,697	\$70,084
Fremont	321	\$43,474	\$102,598
Gem	707	\$117,835	\$278,090
Gooding	395	\$48,094	\$113,501
Idaho	373	\$43,617	\$102,936
Jefferson	399	\$56,364	\$133,019
Jerome	310	\$48,957	\$115,538
Kootenai	1,725	\$274,144	\$646,979
Latah	1,002	\$189,638	\$447,545
Lemhi	174	\$24,445	\$57,690
Lewis	159	\$19,924	\$47,020
Lincoln	124	\$16,372	\$38,637
Madison	369	\$52,159	\$123,095
Minidoka	374	\$45,694	\$107,837
Nez Perce	905	\$144,397	\$340,776
Oneida	99	\$12,049	\$28,435
Owyhee	195	\$19,308	\$45,566
Payette	292	\$36,574	\$86,250
Power	175	\$23,747	\$56,042
Shoshone	351	\$46,664	\$110,127
Teton	96	\$12,495	\$29,488
Twin Falls	1,178	\$182,120	\$429,803
Valley	292	\$49,667	\$117,214
Washington	287	\$36,921	\$87,133
TOTALS	26,902	\$4.28 million	\$10.11 million

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