

FREA Legislation Update, April 19, 2010

A number of people have asked what else can we do to fight against cutting out the Health Insurance Subsidy and other detrimental acts to retirees by the current legislature. Both the House and Senate will be in fast and furious activity these last 10 days, and our opportunities to lobby on any further proposal will have to be very timely.

The House passed HB - 5701 which would end the Health Insurance Subsidy in December of this year. It was rejected by the Senate and sent back to the House; the Senate agreed to discuss the bill in conference. The bill now is eligible for discussion in budget conference between the House and Senate. It is unlikely that the Senate will approve deleting the HIS this year; they could possibly reduce it from \$5 per year to a lesser amount, or they could substitute language that would change our annual COLA from 3 percent to a figure based on the Consumer Price Index. It would be very fortunate for us if the COLA and HIS both remain unchanged this year. As of today, SB - 660 and HB - 413 proposing to close the pension retirement plan to all new hires, are not moving; it is likely they will die in committee.

The Budget Conference Committee has been named, and meetings will be taking place this week, but we aren't promised more than two hours notice which is to be posted on the 4th floor of the Rotunda and outside the Policy & Steering Committee room. Decisions will be made, and input from us on proposals will have to go directly to individual legislators. We, and several other organizations lobbied hard, you have made yourselves heard, and it is OK to keep contacting your legislators that you appreciate they listened. We will attempt to stay in the know and alert everyone to proposals that are made.

LARRY CARMICHAEL