

# Senate Republican Office

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Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court Street NE, S-323  
Salem, Oregon 97301

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
January 25, 2010

CONTACT: Michael Gay  
(503) 986-1950  
(503) 781-8559

## **Senate Republicans call for veto override on PERS bill**

**Salem, OR** – Oregon Senate Republicans are calling for an immediate veto override of Senate Bill 897 when the legislature convenes in February. Republicans believe that this bill is crucial to protecting public employees from unfair retirement calculation errors. The bill passed the Senate 28 – 0 in the 2009 legislative session.

"It's time to stop letting bureaucrats dump liability for their mistakes onto the backs of citizens," said Senator Ted Ferrioli (R-John Day). "Under a policy advanced by the current administration and defended by Governor Ted Kulongoski's veto, if bureaucrats screw up, retirees lose. If they complain, the government says, 'You trusted us? Too bad.'"

The bill is intended to protect fairness and encourage accountability in Oregon's Public Employee Retirement System (PERS). The bill allows more PERS retirees to purchase health insurance benefits, allows all eligible service to be credited towards retirement, and allows a retiree to occupy the Board position designated for a PERS member.

Most importantly, the bill demands that data used to calculate retirement benefits be verified by state officials and locked in. In the past, the discovery of misapplied formulas has changed benefit calculations after the fact, leaving retirees with lower retirement income than their plan selection promised.

In some cases, retirees have been ordered to pay back the difference months after the error, upending retirement plans and forcing some workers out of retirement.

"While many people believe we still have a long way to go with PERS reforms, almost no one but Governor Kulongoski believes retirees should pay for state agency math errors," said Ferrioli. "Overriding this veto is the right thing to do."

The veto overrides will be among the first orders of business when the legislature convenes on February 1st.

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