

# The Voice



A Newsletter for Yakima County School Retirees

November 2025

## Meet Your Legislators from the 14th and 15th Districts

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Rep. Jeremie Dufault



Rep. Chris Cory



Rep. Gloria Mendoza



Rep. Deb Manjarez



Sen. Curtis King



Sen. Vicki Torres

Our November program is being arranged by Larry Scholl, our YCSRA Legislative Coordinator. All of the representatives pictured have been invited to attend our next General Meeting. They will have a time to address the group and then answer our questions. The 2026 session begins in January.

### Legislative Hotline

- 1-800-562-6000
- Operational only during the legislative session



**THE VOICE**

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509 966 9341

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**Outreach**

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**Welcome/Registration**

Jan Saxton  
509 658 1527

Coreen Fortin  
509 966 2669

**Mini-grants**

Linda Sumner  
509 248 1875

# GENERAL MEETING

**When:** Monday, November 3, 2025

**Where:** Englewood Christian Church, 511 N 44th Avenue

**Fellowship:** 12:00 pm

Coffee/tea and treats will be provided

**Program:** Legislative Panel

Larry Scholl has arranged for a panel of our local legislators in the 14th & 15th legislative districts and Senator Curtis King to attend. They will share their goals for the new session and answer your questions.



**The Following People have signed up to bring:**

**REFRESHMENTS**

Millie Stenehjem 509 654 3319  
Coreen Fortin 509 901 2963  
Norma Haney 509 961 8616  
Nancy Lindgren 509 307 8048

**DRAWING PRIZES**

Norma Haney 509 961 8616  
Sue & John Osegueda 509 952 9457  
Rose Churchley 509 965 2636  
Linda Sumner 509 248 1875

**Make sure we have your proper email**

If you have changed your email address in the last year, please send me a corrected one. Thanks!  
Sandy Gavin, sandyg1948@gmail.com

Opinions expressed in **The Voice** are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the view of the YCSRA Board or the editors.

Editorial contributions and articles as well as ideas for articles are welcome.

The deadline is the 12th of each month. Send information to Kathy Schultz.

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## WE SEND OUT WSSRA GREETINGS!

Let's support our members with get well wishes, condolences, thank yous, congratulations, thinking of you and more. Email or call me with names and I'll get the card(s) sent out for you.  
Email: cmstenehjem@msn.com or 509-966-3409. Leave a message if no one answers.

~ Millie Stenehjem



# MINI-GRANT APPLICATION

As a member of **Yakima County School Retirees**, you are eligible to apply for a mini-grant to use with the children in your school. These grants are intended for special projects or classroom materials. **Grants up to \$500 are available.** It is a token of our appreciation for all that you do to help students achieve their potential. This year we have **\$12,000** to award. So let us help you with that great idea you have for your class or school.

Grant applications must be received by **Friday, November 14, 2025**. Applicants receiving grants will be notified by December 14, 2025. If you receive a mini-grant, we ask that you plan to share with us a written description along with pictures of how this mini-grant benefited your students. This will become part of a display at our May 4, 2026 general meeting. Please send it by April 16, 2025 to: Linda Sumner, 2607 Clinton Way, Yakima, WA 98902

**Please complete the application below and attach to your typewritten sheet outlining grant details. Make it brief and specific.**

APPLICANT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

GRANT TITLE \_\_\_\_\_

AMOUNT REQUESTED \_\_\_\_\_ NUMBER OF STUDENTS SERVED \_\_\_\_\_

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION - Attach a separate typewritten sheet outlining GRANT details.

APPLICANT HOME PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICANT (PERSONAL) EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL NAME AND ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

SUPERVISOR/PRINCIPAL (print name) \_\_\_\_\_

SUPERVISOR/PRINCIPAL SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

YOUR SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return this completed application along with your typewritten grant description to:**

**Linda Sumner YCSRA Mini-grants  
2607 Clinton Way, Yakima, WA 98902**

**This application must be received by the due date: Friday, November 14th.**

**The completed application must be RECEIVED by the due date.**



# OCTOBER LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By Emmet Mills

A late-September report from the Economic and Revenue Forecast Council brought concerning news for the upcoming 2026 Washington State Legislative Session. State revenue is projected to fall \$500 million below expectations over the next two years. This means legislators will once again be faced with difficult choices, cutting spending, raising new revenue, or both. Earlier this year, the legislature already had to address a \$12 to \$16 billion budget shortfall, so while next year's \$500 million gap is smaller, few "easy" options remain on the table.



In preparation for the next session, WSSRA will continue to urge the Select Committee on Pension Policy to endorse Substitute Senate Bill 5085, which would restore an ongoing Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) for TRS 1 and PERS 1 retirees. Encouragingly, SSB 5085 would generate long-term savings of more than \$1 billion for state and local governments. However, given the current budget pressures, we may also need to be ready to play defense. One potential area of concern is the \$183 per month benefit that the state provides to retirees who receive health insurance through the Public Employees Benefits Board. This benefit is not contractually guaranteed, meaning the legislature could attempt to reduce or eliminate it. If that happens, it will be up to us to protect retiree health care funding.

Now, more than ever, legislators need to hear from us. Getting in touch is easy. Simply call (800) 562-6000 between 8:00 AM–12:00 PM or 1:00–4:30 PM on a weekday. You'll be connected with an operator who will take your name and address and send your message directly to your legislators.



In your own words, please tell them that the legislature must pass Substitute Senate Bill 5085 to restore an ongoing COLA for TRS 1 and PERS 1 retirees, and to protect retired teacher and school employee health insurance.

Thank you for helping us make a difference.

## YCSRA MEMBERSHIP

The Yakima County School Retirees' Association (YCSRA) continues to have the largest membership of any of the 30 units in the State (1,467); however, our membership continues to slowly decline due to natural attrition. Larger numbers mean a larger influence in Olympia, more grants to schools, more scholarships and more donations to social service organizations. Retired school employees can continue to support education from the easy chair by joining the Association. Joining is easy and can be done on the YCSRA website ([yakima-county-sra.org](http://yakima-county-sra.org)) or by contacting Patrick Walsh, membership chair at 509-391-4906. There are no contracts and the association is nonpartisan. Hope to add you to our numbers soon.





# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By Larry Scholl

## Review your healthcare options

In January of 2026, the Washington State Legislature begins a short 60-day session. Yakima County will be sending five local legislators back to Olympia to either generate new legislation or “tweak” existing legislation. Declining revenue forecasts may make their jobs even more difficult as they try to reconcile existing program commitments with income levels that may be less than anticipated when the programs were created by legislative action.

For School Retirees, the lack of legislative action during the last session on solving the Teacher Retirement System Plan 1 COLA issue is the “Elephant in the Room.” TRS Plan 1 retirees were the only state-sponsored retirement group that did not get a Cost-of-Living Adjustment in their July retirement benefit.

At our November meeting of WSSRA, our local elected legislators will be in attendance to help us understand the work they do in Olympia.

### Our Local Legislators

#### District 14

Senator Curtis King has served as Senator since 2007. He is the ranking member on the Transportation Committee and the Labor and Commerce Committee. He also serves on the Rules Committee. Senator King has a B.A. in Physics/Mathematics and an MBA. Locally, King has served on numerous boards and committees, including the Yakima County Fair Board.

Representative Deb Manjarrez is in her first term in the Legislature. She serves as Assistant Ranking Member on the Housing Committee, and also serves on the Appropriations Committee and the Health Care and Wellness Committee. Representative Manjarrez and her husband are orchardists in the Wapato area. Deb is also a Certified Public Accountant and has been a senior partner in her accounting firm for over 25 years. She also chaired the Wapato Chamber of Commerce for 10 years.

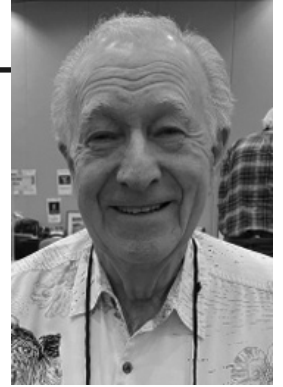
Representative Gloria Mendoza is in her first term in the Washington State Legislature. Representative Mendoza grew up in Grandview, Washington, and is raising a family there. Gloria has many years in public service and has owned and operated various small businesses, including GMC Training Institute, a private vocational and technical school. She has also served on the Grandview City Council, the Grandview Chamber of Commerce, and as Grandview’s mayor. In Olympia, Representative Mendoza serves on the Transportation Committee, the Environment & Energy Committee, and the Postsecondary Education and Workforce Committee.

#### District 15

Representative Chris Corry is in his fourth term as a legislator and has served in both the 14th and 15th Legislative Districts. Representative Corry holds a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Washington. He has served on the Yakima County Fair Board, Yakima County Crime Stoppers, the Salvation Army Advisory Board, and is a member of Southwest Rotary. In Olympia, Chris serves on the Committee for Consumer Protection and Business, the Appropriations Committee, and the Rules Committee.

Representative Jeremie Dufault is back in Olympia for the second time. Representative Dufault has a law degree and completed tours in Kuwait and Afghanistan with the U.S. Army JAG Corps. He is currently a Lt. Colonel in the Army Reserves. He has served on the Selah City Council, Yakima Veterans Board, Yakima Valley Technical Skills Center Advisory Council, and the Yakima County Economic Development Board. In Olympia, Jeremie serves as Assistant Ranking Member on the Consumer Protection and Commerce Committee, the Housing Committee, and the Rules Committee.

During the last session, our area legislators worked tirelessly to stop the proposed closing of Yakima Valley School in Selah.



# SIGNS OF FALL

Leaf color changes      Layering

Cooler weather      Sweaters

Changing batteries in the  
smoke detector

## Investment and Retirement Webinars

Two autumn webinars have been scheduled. The Washington State Investment Board will present to WSSRA members on October 29. A pre-retirement webinar has been scheduled for November 13. Guest speakers for the pre-retirement webinar will be from the Washington Health Care Authority and the Washington Health Plan.

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