



Dear SDSEO Member:

Here's a repeat from last year: "The legislative session has started well for you. Overall, the tone about state government employees is pretty good. We haven't had any negative legislation to fight and have good legislation to support." I spent a lot of the off-session working on getting good proposals from the governor to start with, and trying to mitigate or eliminate possible bad proposals from all over the place. So far so good.

The state employee compensation and health budget hearing will be the very last budget hearing on the very last day of Joint Appropriations budget hearings, Feb. 8 from 9:45 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. Here is the broad brushstroke of the Governor's plan for state employees:

<https://bfm.sd.gov/budget/FY2024/EmployeeCompensation.pdf>. The 5% across the board is there, as is the extra state kick in on your health insurance. I have been told that employees WILL BE ASKED TO CONTRIBUTE MORE AS WELL; I do not have many details beyond that but am seeking them.

There hasn't been a bunch of compensation talk for state employees outside of the Legislative Branch, which the Legislature put right up front in budget hearings. Legislators are giving themselves 6.5% raises despite state household income going up only 5.9%. It's good to write the laws that set your own pay, eh? You can see that on page 4 of this document:

<https://mylrc.sdlegislature.gov/api/Documents/Attachment/242683.pdf>.

Also in that document are a bunch of extra upward salary adjustments for employees of the Legislature. While these special raises were not covered in Gov. Noem's original budget, testimony from the Bureau of Finance and Management last week indicated she supports those raises (as well as another bundle for the Unified Judicial System, though hopefully their regular employees and not their judges, who cleaned up the last two sessions with special legislation) and will incorporate them into her budget. Some of those adjustments were already in Gov. Noem's budget in "targeted job and equity adjustments," so the Legislature probably jumped the gun on giving their own employees more than everyone else just because they could.

You can probably tell I'm full-up tired of some past Legislatures' seeming "I've got mine so who cares about you" philosophy. I've attached the last Legislative Update from last session as a reminder of where we were the last two years.

Keep the faith and keep up the fight.

Former SDSEO Executive Director Ken Melius passed away Jan. 6. Members of the SDSEO who were with the organization when he was with the SDSEO have fond, lasting memories of Ken. May he rest in peace. His obituary is here:

<https://www.argusleader.com/obituaries/sal085069?fbclid=IwAR0LhNPuRN7PPlsgAHWv3TvGoi5vIJMkh28iVqXq4Cz1DcmiL6dma3EUWXM>.

There was an executive director between Ken and myself, but something Ken and I talked about when he met with me after I came on with the SDSEO in December 2011 was the decline in membership in the SDSEO that began prior to him leaving the SDSEO in the early 2000s and still continues to this day. Society needs to get back to at least some of that grass-roots, buy-in, boot-strap, what-can-I-and-we-do-together mentality. Mass high turnover in some departments combined with retirements of core SDSEO building blocks sure haven't helped the SDSEO's member numbers, but we can do more to recruit members.

All the SDSEO's funding comes from membership; outfits like this receive zero state or federal dollars or incentives or tax breaks. While so much of the non-profit universe is focused on deserving 501c(3) charities that were created to seek donations and then give the funds away to hard-pressed folks either in the form of cash or in the form of services, professional and labor non-profits such as the SDSEO are important too. Non-profit organizations like the SDSEO exist to help create and maintain healthy careers and service, hopefully keeping charities in the business of providing aid to the hardest pressed. That's why charities have tax-free donation and deduction status and organizations like the SDSEO do not.

Make sure to spread the word about the SDSEO and encourage membership. Membership is \$10/month. You're likely going to go out with co-workers on lunch or after work: Maybe offer to pay for their lunch that one time (you're probably going to anyway at some point, since you're a South Dakotan) and encourage them to join the SDSEO, which likely costs less than 1 work lunch a month.

To help out with recruiting, I've attached SDSEO recruitment/info docs. (For the Investment Trust brochure, the Reinke Gray email contact is bettejo@reinkegray.com. They have changed their email address.)

Lets' add a couple dozen new members in the next couple weeks. Spread the good word.

Make sure to let me know if you experience any problems at all as a state employee. Our Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/my.SDSEO/>. Our Facebook gets lots of traffic and comments, so try to check it out. Our Twitter handle: @MySDSEO

I don't have an expansive bill list with this update. There are three South Dakota Retirement System bill that will start in the House. No hearing date has been set. Descriptions of those bills are here: <https://sdrs.sd.gov/docs/2023ProposedLegislation.pdf>.

There are some juvenile justice bills and prison construction bills, and I'll provide some updates on them, but they're not something we take positions on. Same thing with the bills to build new state computer systems and a public health lab and various university building proposals and the like.

SDSEO 2022 bill list

Bill	Title	Explanation	Hearing Info
HB 1007	to add emergency medical services personnel to Class B public safety		

	membership of the South Dakota Retirement System.		
HB 1008	to revise provisions relating to actuarial terminology used by the South Dakota Retirement System.		
HB 1009	update and clarify certain provisions relating to the South Dakota Retirement System.		
SB 48	enhance the penalty for attempted first degree murder of a law enforcement officer.		

Best,

Eric

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