



Dear SDSEO Member:

The State Employee Compensation and Health hearing was this past week. So some bullets:

- Here are the hearing documents: <https://sdlegislature.gov/Budget/Documents/46>.
- Here is the hearing audio link: <https://sdpb.sd.gov/sdpbpodcast/2023/jap20.mp3>.
 - First up in the audio is the Bureau of Human Resources budget hearing. It lasts about 40 minutes. For that portion of the hearing, you can refer to this document: <https://mylrc.sdlegislature.gov/api/Documents/Attachment/248630.pdf>.
 - After that is the State Employee Compensation and Health hearing.
 - The presentation document for that portion is here: <https://mylrc.sdlegislature.gov/api/Documents/Attachment/248631.pdf>.
 - I pitch for the SDSEO in the public testimony portion at the conclusion. I also get some questions/comments/and two thanks from three appropriators.

Here is a really great news piece on it all from Eric Mayer from KELO: [BFM, BHR aiming for \\$38 million in targeted pay raises for state employees \(keloland.com\)](https://keloland.com). He does a supreme job of breaking down the state's plan, even better than I could have done on the hearing because I'm always writing extra testimony points and taking/sending messages and texts during the hearing. If you take in the live hearing video or attend the hearing in person, you can typically see me in the background turning pages, or scribbling, or tapping away.

Next year, please plan to attend the hearing and testify. It would be nice to have 50 state employees there. I'm not kidding. If we have that many, we can have one or two testify and the rest can just say "We are in unity." Strength and power comes from unity.

TOP NEWS:

Chair of Joint Appropriations State Senator Jean Hunhoff said in a crackerbarrel this weekend she's not getting many emails from state employees asking for more than 5%. Senator Hunhoff is one of the few legislators who have been around longer than my 11 years and surely knows the problems state employees have had when it comes to contacting legislators. But I think we can take it on faith that she means what she says and wants to hear from you. I think she's saying, "Okay, we got the budget hearing out of the way, and you made your points. So here's your chance."

So please email her and let her know what you and your family feel and need for your career. Her email address is jean.hunhoff@sdlegislature.gov. She needs to know what is in your heart. She also said that the Human Services Center in Yankton, which is in her district, is being looked at for losing more beds by one of the Appropriations "work groups" they have formed to parse out the \$5 billion budget. The committee has increasingly moved to non-public work groups over the last several sessions. I'm not a believer in the work groups because some ask stakeholders to attend, and others (such as the HSC and

state employee ones) do not. I don't know how in the world groups can get fair representation when some outfits are allowed representation, but others are not, but that's what we have for now. So let's work it.

Budget setting is this week. You know the drill: It used to be that the state made one budget presentation and then the appropriations committee went to work breaking it down and coming up with its estimate. Then the legislature decided it wanted its own estimate in there too, so went ahead and did that. So now we have two budget estimates they hear before parsing them both out. No matter, every year the conservative estimates end up multiples of millions of dollars short and the state banks those into budget reserves along with "unspent funds" they had appropriated. Oftentimes those unspent funds are due to the state not being able to hire employees because the pay and benefits are poor, and then that also results in agencies (such as HSC) not being able to get their jobs done because they don't have the employees so have to "revert" even more funds. And then the state jobs are turned into contract jobs that are not tied to the "general pay structure" and hammer the budget even more.

The South Dakota Retirement System bills were heard in House Retirement Laws this week. The three SDRS bills went thru. The other two outside the SDRS system, one for 911 operators to go Class B and one for a retire-rehire-type return for certain public school teachers did not. The approved bills now move to the Senate.

Keep the faith and keep up the fight.

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.)

We added ZERO new members this week and had one cancellation. That's pretty poor.

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

SDSEO 2023 bill list attached to email

Sincerely

Eric

Eric Ollila

Executive Director

South Dakota State Employees Organization