

**Californians for  
Health Care &  
Retirement  
Security**

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**COALITION WORKING TO PROTECT PUBLIC PENSIONS  
AGREES WITH BI-PARTISAN BENEFITS COMMISSION REPORT:  
PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PENSIONS ARE FUNDAMENTALLY SOUND**

*Well-managed systems keep the promise to hard-working teachers, nurses,  
peace officers, firefighters and other public employees*

**(SACRAMENTO)** – The just-released report by the Governor’s Public Employee Post-Employment Benefits Commission - detailing its plans for addressing future pension and health care responsibilities for California’s public employees – reaffirms that California’s public pension system is healthy and well-funded, said the chairman of Californians for Health Care and Retirement Security (CHCRS).

“Pension funds are in good shape,” said Dave Low, CHCRS chairman and a member of the Governor’s commission. “The commission’s report and recommendations reinforce the fact that California’s systems for providing retirement security for our hard-working public employees are well-run and well-funded. It’s these well-managed systems that allow our state, local governments and school districts to recruit and retain good public employees, while keeping the promise made to them to provide a secure retirement.”

While the commission’s report projected the amount in retiree health care benefits owed by state and local governments to be at least \$118 billion over the next 30 years, Low said any attempt by some to use that figure to justify a negative change in the way government provides health benefits for its retirees is un-warranted and unfair.

“The issue of the unfunded liability in retiree health care must be viewed in context,” said Low, “and, as noted in the report, putting aside funds now to cover future liabilities is one way to guarantee that the funds will be available to future retirees.

**(more)**

“In fact,” continued Low, “since many public agencies throughout California offer little or no retiree health care, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to this issue. Those that provide retiree health care can deal with these costs through a reasonable pre-funding strategy, as was recommended in the commission’s final report.”

Commenting on former Assemblyman Keith Richman’s latest plans to re-introduce his initiative that unfairly cuts public pensions and health care, Low said, “Mr. Richman’s first initiative attempt was poorly thought out and hastily-drafted, and this latest version is equally punitive and unfair. He is out of touch with Californians and out of touch with hard-working teachers, nurses, firefighters, peace officers, and other public employees. Polls continue to show that the public does not want to take away their hard-earned pensions and health care.”

“This bi-partisan commission has issued a reasonable set of recommendations,” added Low, “and I agree with Chairman Gerry Parsky that the commission’s recommendations should serve as a ‘blueprint’ for state and local leaders as they prepare for the future. Gov. Schwarzenegger and the legislature should be given an opportunity to act on these recommendations and begin that planning. Now is not the time to keep playing games with public employee pensions and health care benefits.”

Californians for Health Care and Retirement Security (CHCRS) is a coalition representing California’s teachers, nurses, peace officers, firefighters and other public employees, working to protect the hard-earned retirement benefits of California’s public workers.

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