

Dear OEA-Retired member,

*We understand that many of our members continue to receive communication from POP5 or Protect Our Pensions. In February, we sent out the communication below. Because this communication from the organization continues, we believe that it is valuable to resend the correspondence.*

You may have recently received a mailing from a new organization calling itself “POP5” or “Protect Our Pensions.” Led by the former executive director of Public Employee Retirees, Inc. (PERI), its stated purpose is to “preserve Ohio’s defined benefit pension plans,” including all five of the public retirement systems in Ohio. POP5 is not affiliated with OEA or OEA-Retired.

While there does not appear to be any inherent conflict between the stated goals of POP5 and OEA, it is important to note that there is nothing that POP5 is seeking to accomplish that OEA and our allies are not already working on. OEA, which currently represents over 124,000 educators, including over 9,000 retired members, is deeply committed to protecting and preserving retirement security for all current and future retirees in the State Teachers Retirement System (STRS), School Employees Retirement System (SERS), and Public Employees Retirement System (PERS). We are actively engaged in current efforts to improve the funding status of all the pension systems and to preserve retiree healthcare benefits. Our advocacy on retirement system issues benefits not only our members, but our very system of public education and the students we serve.

We take our role as a collective voice for active and retired educators very seriously, and we work in coalition with a variety of other organizations that share our goals, including established retiree advocacy groups (ORTA, PERI, SERI) and other unions. Of particular note, OEA helps lead the Healthcare and Pension Advocates for STRS Coalition (HPA), which includes organizations representing active and retired employees from both K-12 and higher education, as well as representatives of employers. POP5 is not a member of that coalition and has not, as far as we know, expressed any interest in joining it.

It is not uncommon for OEA-Retired members (or anyone else, for that matter) to belong to multiple organizations that share their values. We just believe it’s important that you are fully informed before making any decisions regarding joining this or any other start-up organization.

Sincerely,

Becky Higgins, OEA President

John Hoyes, OEA-Retired Chair