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Come celebrate the 31st AEA-Retired Annual Meeting at the Scottsdale Resort on May 10th



Good food, good friends, fun and prizes, await attendees at the 31st Annual Meeting of AEA-Retired at the Scottsdale Resort at McCormick Ranch, 7700 E. McCormick Parkway, Scottsdale, AZ. As usual,



great speakers will make you well-informed members of a terrific organization.

Attendees will be treated to the latest information on the Arizona State Retirement System from featured speaker Paul Matson, Executive Director of ASRS. Luci Messing, AEA-Retired Political Action Chairperson will present a summary of the 2019 legislative session, and AEA President Joe Thomas will inform attendees about recent developments in the RedForED movement.

An important part of every Annual Meeting is the election of officers and Representatives-at-Large who comprise the AEA-Retired Executive Board. In keeping with our Constitution & Bylaws, only the 87 elected delegates (who are also delegates to the AEA Delegate Assembly) may vote in these elections. This year delegates will elect a Secretary and six Representatives-at-Large, and vote on proposed Constitution/Bylaw amendments.

member who has been an exemplary leader and volunteer within the organization and in the community. Luci Messing, AEA-Retired Political Action Chairperson, has been selected to be this year's recipient.

This is the year to attend

If you've never attended an Annual Meeting, make this the year you do. You're bound to see old friends, and make new ones. There is a nominal Annual Meeting registration fee of \$40, which helps to defray the cost of the meeting room, materials and the lunch. **Fill out the registration form on page 4 and send it in by May 1, or register online with a credit card at**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/May2019AnnualMeeting>

Fantastic guest speakers, a delicious gourmet-style lunch, and the legendary AEA-Retired Happy Hour all await your presence at the Annual Meeting. Hope to see you there!

Messing to receive Reynolds Award

Another exciting part of each Annual Meeting is the awarding of the Les Reynolds Distinguished Senior Service Award to a

AEA-Retired Calendar



- March 12 —AEA-Retired Board Meeting, AEA Headquarters
- April 9—AEA-Retired Board Meeting, AEA Headquarters
- May 10—AEA-Retired Annual Meeting, Scottsdale Resort, Scottsdale
- May 10-11—AEA Delegate Assembly, Scottsdale Resort, Scottsdale
- June 30-July 1—NEA Retired Annual Meeting, Houston, TX
- July 3-7—NEA Representative Assembly, Houston, TX

ASRS UPDATE BY STEVE RAMOS



The fight to protect our retirement system is here, and AEA-Retired can't do it alone!

Last fall AEA-Retired learned that the Arizona Chamber of Commerce had made the reform of the Arizona State Retirement System (ASRS) a top priority for the 2019 legislative session. AEA-Retired immediately called together local labor groups as part of **The Arizona Retirement Security Coalition (ARSC)**, to defend our ASRS pension and make sure Arizonans hear the truth about Defined Benefit (DB) vs. 401k-style Defined Contribution (DC) retirement plans. Each of the following core groups contributed funding towards a matching grant from our friends at the **National Public Pension Coalition (NPPC)**.

- AARA** - Arizona Alliance for Retired Americans
- AASRA** - All Arizona School Retirees Association
- ACEP** - Arizona Center For Economic Progress
- AEA** - Arizona Education Association
- AEA-Retired** - Arizona Education Association Retired
- AFL - CIO** - American Federation of Labor – Congress of Industrial Organizations
- AFSCME** - American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees
- MCCEA** - Maricopa Community Colleges Faculty Association

With funding secured, ARSC hired a lobbyist/coordinator and immediately began to plan for a fight.

In January the Arizona chapter of the Koch brothers **Americans for Prosperity** announced that they would support legislation converting the ASRS DB pension plan into a 401k-style DC plan. Later, ASRS Director Paul Matson met with representatives of the **Arizona Chamber of Commerce Foundation**, their advisor Lisa Graham Keegan and representatives from the libertarian **Reason Foundation**. These same groups invited ASRS Director Matson, to join them at the capitol for a meeting on pensions, with members of the Republican caucus. Mr. Matson asked if representatives of retiree groups could be invited to the meeting. The answer was NO. On January 30th, ARSC, partnered with the NPPC to hold our own briefing with legislators and Director Matson at the capitol. Since those early meetings, ARSC has been hard at work developing our message and planning a member education campaign. We have not seen a reform bill emerge this session, but

conversations with legislators indicate that both Reason and the Arizona Chamber are working on something.

Because pensions are protected by the Arizona Constitution, any changes to current members benefits would require changing the constitution. Unfortunately, the legislature has found that pretty easy to do. In 2016, they passed Prop. 124, changing the Public Safety pension plan, and again in 2018 with Prop. 125, changing the Corrections Officers pension. The next election is 2020.

Who would pay if reform legislation only placed new employees in a 401k-style DC plan and left current members alone?

- RETIREES**, who have not had a PBI since 2005.
- CURRENT EMPLOYEES**, who would see contribution rates go even higher than expected.
- NEW EMPLOYEES**, who make the wrong choice and end up without enough funds for a secure retirement.

The ARSC message is as follows:

- ASRS IS THE PREMIER PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PENSION PLAN IN ARIZONA AND ONE OF THE TOP RATED PLANS IN THE NATION;**
- 401K RETIREMENT PLANS ARE A BAD CHOICE FOR ARIZONA PUBLIC EMPLOYEES AND TAXPAYERS;**
- 401K PLANS COST MORE TO ADMINISTER AND HAVE HIGHER RISKS AND LOWER RETURNS;**
- DEFINED BENEFIT PENSIONS ATTRACT AND KEEP EMPLOYEES IN PUBLIC SERVICE JOBS AND IN ARIZONA;**
- 401K PLANS CAN LEAVE RETIREES SHORT OF BENEFITS AND DEPENDENT ON GOVERNMENT WELFARE.**

AEA Retired is reaching out to our membership and others with information to share. Our organization believes that education employees retire from their jobs not their profession. We will need everybody's help to protect both our ASRS pension and our profession for our children and grandchildren.

Contact your legislators and watch for information updates.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY JULIE HORWIN



Our campaigns for justice are never truly over

On February 1, 1968, two sanitation workers in Memphis, Echol Cole and Robert Walker, were seeking shelter in the back of their garbage truck during a powerful storm. Memphis sanitation workers had often complained about the terrible condition of the trucks, but their words—like the men themselves—were never taken seriously by city officials. The truck's compactor malfunctioned on this particular day, and both men were crushed to death.

Their deaths 50 years ago ignited a two-month strike. The historic strike represented a major step forward for workers' rights, but ended in the death, on April 4, 1968, of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Cole and Walker were members of AFSCME. I have become quite close to our organized colleagues who lead and represent the retired AFSCME (American Federation of State, County, Municipal Employees), UFCW (United Food and Commercial Workers), AASRA (All Arizona School Retirees Association), Maricopa Community College Faculty Association and the AFL-CIO.

You see, when I heard about plans to weaken and perhaps topple the ASRS – the last best thing that keeps great teachers in the classroom – I wrote a \$33,000.00 grant and pulled together a coalition of labor organizations who would support us in our efforts. We call it the Arizona Retirement Security Coalition (ARSC). We meet each Monday to strategize and work on messaging in order that we are ahead of the game if a bill is dropped this legislative system or in next year's session.

The sanitation workers' strike was about safety standards, pay, and benefits, and the right to be represented by their union.

Sound familiar? Educators in 2018 and now in 2019 are doing the same – for the very same reasons. We are joining our active educators in a demand for justice on the job, respect for working people, and the dignity of a job that can support a family. But all of these roads lead to what we are really fighting for – the ability of every student in Arizona to be taught by a great educator. Working conditions, as you know, are what attracts and retains excellent educators in all aspects of school life, from the secretary, to the custodians, to the teachers and the administrators and the many talented support personnel working to give Arizona students opportunities.

And where do those children of workers who comprise organized labor attend school? 80% of them are in tradition-

al public schools. That is why our organized labor brethren support a strong ASRS.

What we do protects our opportunities for our students' futures, and guarantees a safe dignified retirement for those who spend their working lives making that happen. We keep our schools open, our kids safe, and we continue to work for an equitable funding system.

It is also important to appreciate the freedom we have today to join unions, negotiate collectively, and raise our voices together. For educators, this means advocating for the resources our students deserve and the tools we need as dedicated professionals. We can advocate together for the opportunity all students deserve to have an education that sparks their curiosity and desire to learn.

Union rights are critical at a time when the divide between the wealthy and working families is wider than ever. But these rights are at risk. Corporate CEOs and their powerful allies want to silence our voices. Working people are stronger when we come together in unions, and union foes know it. They know that unions exert pressure on industries that raises wages and improves benefits, even for those who are not union members themselves.

Dr. King understood the connection between workers' rights and civil rights and the power of unions. That's why he went to stand with the sanitation workers—not just once but three times. He did this despite the counsel of advisers who urged him not to get involved and to stay focused on planning the Poor People's Campaign. Dr. King famously said in Memphis, on the last night of his life and the eve of the second march:

"Now...we've got to give ourselves to this struggle until the end. Nothing would be more tragic than to stop at this point in Memphis. We've got to see it through. And when we have our march, you need to be there. If it means leaving work, if it means leaving school—be there. Be concerned about your brother. You may not be on strike. But either we go up together, or we go down together."

I hope that this year, Arizona educators don't need to walk out of their classrooms to the State Capital for their students. But if they do, I know that we as retired educators will once again support them.

And they in turn have been stalwart in their protection of the ASRS. Please, let's organize around a very important issue to both retired and active educators: Please join ARSC today: <https://protectpensions.org/states/arizona/>

Thank you for your membership. Thank you for being a social justice warrior.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE *By Luci Messing*



AEA Retired had two very successful days at the Capitol in January and February. We also attended the Arizona Retirement Security Coalition Day at the Capitol on March 13th. We remain ever vigilant in monitoring any activity that would impact our pension. It is more important than ever to stay on top of what is happening at the Legislature. One of the best places to keep informed is through Civic Engagement Beyond Voting. Visit their website at www.cebv.us and sign up for their Legislative Update.

You can still sign up for the Request to Speak (RTS) System since bills have now crossed over from their place of origin and will need to go through committee in the opposite chamber. The following information has been taken from their update and may have already been acted upon.

Budget conversations could be more contentious than usual. These conversations typically involve [mostly the majority party](#), but this year, fractures are appearing between Gov. Ducey and his Republican caucus. Disagreements on [tax conformity](#), last session's [vehicle licensing fee](#), the recent [lease-back agreements on Capitol buildings](#), and what to do with this year's [projected budget surplus](#) indicate this session could be a long one. Complicating the situation are the close partisan margins in both chambers, which increase the likelihood of a need for compromise between the two parties.

This is a good week to remind lawmakers that democracy depends on the involvement and input of the citizens who elected them. Legislators seem determined to make citizen democracy harder and harder.

SB1451 would make citizen initiatives even more challenging (because collecting signatures in 110-degree heat isn't hard

enough) by burdening signature gatherers and organizers with more requirements.

Mirror bills **HCR2005** and **SCR1023** require citizen ballot measures to get a percentage of their signatures in each legislative district across the state, making them virtually impossible to achieve.

HB2616 would make it illegal to register voters as part of a paid job (think employee of the DMV or County Recorder).

SB1072 would require voters casting ballots at a Voting Center (instead of local polling place) to show ID. Individually, any one of these bills is bad enough; together they're a concerted attempt to rig the process and make it harder to vote.

What can you do? For bills on the floor, call your own [senator](#) or [representatives](#) depending on the chamber. For bills in committee, use your RTS superpowers.

HB2693, would allow parents to bypass gun-free zones at public schools and keep loaded and unlocked weapons within reach in their cars while dropping off and picking up children. The bill is being pushed by the NRA. Passed the House, headed to the Senate.

HCR2022 would call a Constitutional Convention for term limits. Constitutional opponents (including deceased Supreme Court justice [Antonin Scalia](#)) argue there is no way to limit a convention to the stated intent. We could end up with a "runaway" convention. Passed the House, headed to the Senate.

SB1451 would institute registration of out-of-state signature collectors, and require all petitions for statewide initiatives and referenda to be organized and grouped by circulator. An extra burden on campaigns, as well as an apparent effort to make it easier for opponents of citizen initiatives to disqualify entire signature sheets.

Hopefully, it is not too late to weigh in and prevent these bills from reaching the Governor's desk. Be ready to contact him and have your voice heard. We have the power when we stand together.

AEA-Retired Annual Meeting at the Scottsdale Resort at McCormick Ranch
7700 E McCormick Pkwy, Scottsdale, AZ 85258
Friday, May 10, 2019 9:30 AM – 4:00 PM

Registration Form: The \$40 non-refundable registration fee is payable by check, or money order, to AEA-Retired, and be received **before Wed., May 1, 2019**, or online with credit card at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/May2019AnnualMeeting>

Mail to: AEA-Retired Annual Meeting, 345 East Palm Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85004-1532.

Name _____

Address _____ Zip _____

Phone(s) _____ Email _____

Please circle one of three choices for entree: 1. Achiote rubbed chicken breast 2. Fresh Market Catch Fish 3. Vegetable Wellington.

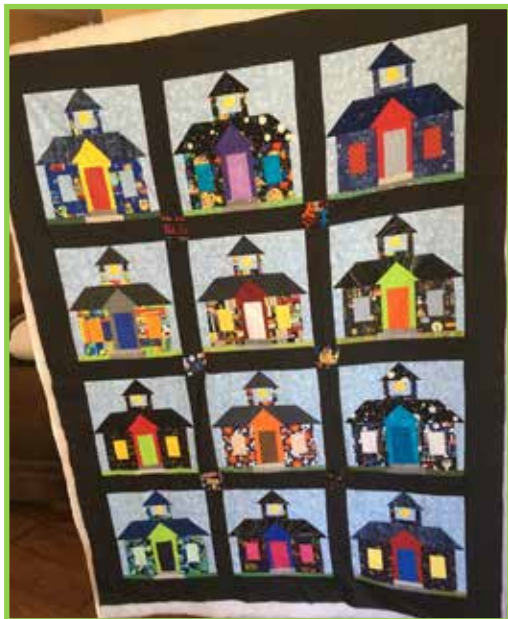
Each of the above choices includes Southwest Caesar salad, Flourless Chocolate Cake, rolls and butter, iced tea, coffee/decaf.

Registering another? Great! Each registrant must pay \$40 registration fee.

2nd Name _____

email _____ Meal Choice _____

Take a chance to win amazing prizes



As you make plans to attend the AEA-Retired Annual Meeting and AEA Delegate Assembly on May 10 and 11, be sure to check out the Fundraising table. Once again, thanks to the talent of one of our own members, we will have a lovely school-themed quilt as one of the prizes.

The winner of the quilt will be announced before the end of the proceedings on Saturday. Other winners will be awarded their prizes throughout the two days.

Even if you are not attending the gatherings, you can still purchase tickets. Contact your local chapter chair or email marilynfreed@aol.com.

AEA-Retired hosts reception for Southern AZ Legislators

Forty AEA and AEA-Retired members had an opportunity to hear from six of our Southern Arizona Legislators at the annual Legislative Luncheon on February 9th. Each legislator spoke to the group and enlightened them about many of the issues facing us at this time. Issues such as vouchers, funding, pensions, and voting rights, to name a few. There was also time for one-on-one conversations. Our legislators urged the members to be pro active, stay informed and then contact legislators and let them know your position on upcoming legislation. They stated that using the RTS system to lobby the group is very effective. So AEA-Retired urges all members to become proficient in using RTS (Request to Speak).

This annual event provides an opportunity for our members to become more involved in the political process.

Legislators in attendance were: Senators Andrea Dalessandro;

Sally Ann Gonzales; and Victoria Steele; Representatives Andres Cano; Domingo DeGrazia; Kirsten Engel; and Daniel Hernandez.



Senator Dalessandro addresses the group.

Proposed Amendments to AEA-Retired Constitution

Delegates will vote on the following proposals during the AEA-Retired Annual Meeting on May 10th. A complete copy of the Constitution & Bylaws can be accessed at the AEA-Retired website at www.azedretired.com.

In the Constitution, Article V, several changes to be considered;

Section 4 change “..majority vote of the ~~members~~ of AEA-Retired..” to “a majority vote of the AEA-Retired delegates..”

In subsection E. change “~~membership~~” to “**delegates.**”

In subsection F. change “~~general membership~~” to “**delegates.**”

Eliminate the first sentence of Section 4; “~~Officers of the AEA-Retired shall serve their terms so long as they satisfactorily perform the duties of their office.~~”

And then change sentence 2 to read... ~~Where~~ **When it has been determined that an officer may be guilty of malfeasance or nonfeasance in office, such officer may be removed for cause. Said officer shall be notified and a hearing shall take place. It will take a majority vote of the AEA-Retired Delegates to remove the officer from office.**

****Effect if passed—The change would make the removal of an officer the purview of those who are elected to serve as delegates rather than the entire membership of the AEA-Retired.**

Retirees flocked to Lobby Days at the Capitol

On the two lobby days at the Capitol, January 23 and February 13, the purple shirted AEA-Retired members made a positive, strong impression. Advocating for public education and retiree concerns, members met with legislators, sat in on hearings and in general became more acquainted with pending bills and the process of lawmaking.

Luci Messing, AEA-Retired Political Action Chairperson, coordinated the programs. A luncheon was furnished and legislators were able to visit and share ideas/perspectives with the group. When general floor sessions began, the group was introduced in both houses.

Stephanie Parra, AEA Lobbyist outlined proposed education bills. Two bills of major concern were the expansion of vouchers and the transfer of oversight of charters from the Superintendent of Public Instruction Office to the State Treasurer's Office. Members were able to see and participate in testimony at the lengthy, crowded Senate debate. Superintendent of Public Instruction Kathy Hoffman gave compelling testimony against both of these bills. However, both passed along party lines with Republicans on the committee supporting them and Democrats voting against.

Lobby Day events are important for the exposure and the strength AEA-Retired presents. We were heard, acknowledged and respected. A major success!



AEA-Retired & NEA-Retired members learn how to protect their pensions, and increase funding for education

Over 50 AEA-Retired & NEA Retired members and guests attended the **M.O.R.E. (Mobilize, Organize, Recruit and Engage)** event in Phoenix, February 21. The themes of the event centered on saving the Defined Benefit Pension of ASRS, (Arizona State Retirement System) and learning about tax giveaways and how to use those funds to invest in public education.

Luci Messing, AEA-Retired Political Action Chairperson, presented an enlightening slide presentation on tax credits and a tax scroll of hundreds of corporations and businesses who enjoy their tax exempt status. One exemption was particularly stunning. The sales tax

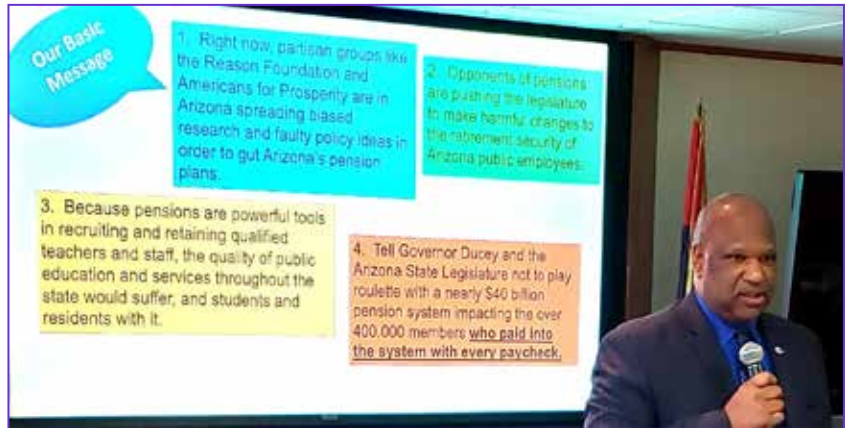
exemption of private airplanes. These loopholes are not reviewed by lawmakers at this time, although there is a bill proposal by Senator Navarrete (LD30) to review these on a regular basis. The bill was passed out of committee, but hasn't been heard by the Committee of the Whole (C.O.W.) yet.

David Lujan, spokesperson for The Arizona Center for Economic Progress, spoke on key facts about the 2019 Fiscal Budget. An informative booklet with pertinent graphs was handed out to participants.

Mr. Lujan also explained in depth Proposition 126 and how it would hurt neighborhoods and schools. For more information on this, go online to AzEconCenter.org. To receive a booklet, call (602) 266-0707 or go to www.AZEconcenter.org. On Twitter @AzEconCenter

Todd Crenshaw, NEA Organizer, emphasized the importance of retirees nationally and in Arizona. He praised AEA-Retired for setting the example and being the vanguard of activism. He also underscored the need to continue to grow the movement and to fight for public education.



Julie Horwin, President of AEA-Retired, highlighted the inequity of taxation in Arizona with a PowerPoint. Adequately funding public schools could be achieved by enhancing the revenue to the state by restoring fair taxes to all citizens of Arizona. Ms. Horwin also stressed the importance of alliances and coalitions. She encouraged participation in the Arizona Retirement Security Coalition, which is advancing an information campaign to explain the attacks on ASRS pensions and a plan to counter misinformation. Go to



Facebook.com/arsc for more information.

A PowerPoint is available and AEA-Retired members are encouraged to share this with others in a house party, meeting or event. More information can also be found online at AEARetired.com.



The Conduit

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AEA-Retired Chapter News

Chapters are an attempt to bring AEA-Retired closer to members. All AEA-Retired members are eligible to join a chapter where they worked or currently live. Meetings usually include an information program, business meeting, lunch or dinner, and time for socializing with friends and colleagues. Anyone interested in forming a new chapter should contact Chapter Coordinators **Susan Sommer**, ssommer114@aol.com or **Suzan Austin** at (480) 947-2089 suzanaustin@cox.net.

Glendale/West Valley Chapter- The meetings are held at Biscuits Café, 19420 N. 59th Ave., Glendale. **The next meeting is Thursday April 4, 2019** at 10:00a.m. Call, text or email **Susie Sommer** at 623-628-1935 or ssommer114@aol.com

Mesa / East Valley Chapter: Met March 6th with guest speaker Jordan Harb, of March for Our Lives Arizona, a coalition of young people whose mission it is to be the driving force in creating safer communities free of gun violence. The next meeting will be May 8th on the 8th floor of the MPS building, 63 E. Main St., Mesa. All are welcome. Contact **Janie Hydrick** at Hydrick@aol.com or (480) 963-1848 for more information.

Greater Tucson Area Chapter: Meetings are held the third Tues. of Sept.—May, at 10:00 AM, and alternating sites between the TEA office and the Southern Region office. Our last meeting was on Tuesday March 19th, at the AEA Southern Region Office at 6873 N. Oracle Road. Our speaker was Dawn Penich-Thacker, the Communication Director for Save Our Schools Arizona. During the last election they became an outstanding organization to defeat the voucher expansion. They have continued their support for public education. I hope you have been reading their emails alerting the public about the continuing push for voucher by the Arizona Legislature. You might want to consider joining some active and retired members for a Lobby Day at the Capitol on March 26th. Contact **Marion Pickens**, Chair 520-296-5908 marionpeterpickens@gmail.com

Phoenix Chapter: Meets at the Beatitudes in Phoenix, 1610 W. Glendale Ave. at 10:30 AM. Contact Chapter Chair **Michele Smith** at 602-463-1624 or mms7997@msn.com.

Scottsdale/Paradise Valley Chapter: The Scottsdale/Paradise Valley AEA-R Chapter meets at Denny's Restaurant on Mayo Blvd. and Scottsdale Rd. at 11:00 a.m. on the 3rd Monday, bi-monthly. The next meeting will be on April 15. Our speaker will be Craig Harris, journalist from the Arizona Republic. He will be sharing information from his award winning series on Arizona charter schools. We welcome any AEA member, or potential member, to our group. For more information contact **Nancy Riley**, 480-596-1144, rileyfam@cox.net, or **Ann Myers** 480-510-8098, azann@mac.com

Southeast Arizona Chapter: The Southeast Arizona AEA-Retired Chapter will meet at La Casita Restaurant in Sierra Vista on Monday, March 18, 5:30 pm. Reservations can be made for all meetings through Chapter Chair Sally Rosén (520) 249-0233 or azcatsally@aol.com. The next meeting will be in May (TBA).

Flagstaff Chapter: If you live in the Flagstaff area, you can't afford to miss out on our AEA-Retired chapter meetings, held on the first Tuesday of each month, 10 AM to noon, in the basement room of Flagstaff Federated Church. We work to stay informed and support Arizona's retirees, educators and students through service projects, political action, and constant monitoring of retirement issues at the state and national levels. We hope you will join us and lend your expertise to our efforts to support our profession and the people we serve. For more information and to RSVP, contact **Tricia Roach** at trrteach6@mac.com or call 928-525-1997.

Kyrene Chapter: **The next meeting will be on April 9** at Native Grill and Wings, 5030 Ray Rd. #5 from 4:30 to 6:30. The guest speakers will be members of the school boards from Kyrene and Tempe Union. They will form a panel to answer questions from those in attendance. Three state legislators from the area are also invited. Active, as well as retired members are invited to attend. For more information or to join the group, contact Ellen Shamah at eshamah@cox.net

Yavapai Chapter: Contact Chairperson **Rob Johan** at johanica31@gmail.com or 630-430-8902 for information about future meetings.