



TO: Interim Retirement & Benefits Committee, 81st Legislature

FROM: Douglas Unger, UNLV Chapter President, & Government Affairs Representative,
Nevada Faculty Alliance ---

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RE: **For February 8, 2022 Meeting -- Agenda Item # 5 – PEBP (& General)**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Doug Unger, UNLV Chapter President and Government Affairs Representative, Nevada Faculty Alliance. Thank you Chair Carlton and the Committee for your consideration.

This is the season of the Great Resignation. Unprecedented numbers of workers are quitting their jobs: 3.9 Million per month, reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Nevada is also experiencing worker flight, including NSHE, according to our Chancellor, along with almost all state offices. Understaffing for the Department of Corrections is now a crisis and a civil rights concern. Among the reasons for the loss of state workers, including staff and faculty in Higher Education, are inadequate COLA increases last session and substandard health insurance and benefits from pandemic budget cuts to PEBP which have not yet been restored. The state took back \$25 Million in its “employer contribution holiday”—hardly any holiday for us—the first time the Legislature has swept PEBP it this way and not paid it back; and state contributions are at least \$20 Million per year less than they were three years ago. Out-of-pocket maximums are now \$5,000 for an individual and \$10,000 for a family, which feels like deliberate punishment. Life insurance was cut in half. Long Term Disability insurance was eliminated during a time when, because of the risk of contracting “long haul” COVID-19, the likelihood of disability has increased. We have repeatedly asked the Interim Finance Subcommittee and the Governor’s office for American Rescue Plan funds to remedy the drastic cuts to PEBP. We’ve been told “no” by the powers-that-be without even the courtesy of an explanation why. No wonder state workers are leaving their jobs. We ask you, please, to do all you can to restore the PEBP budget to pre-pandemic levels. It’s the right thing to do. Thank you.