

April 24, 2018
NW18-006

To: Northwest Regional Council
From: Northwest Council Chair
Subject: **PRE-SUBMITTED NEW BUSINESS:** Financial Support for PSARA

Background

PSARA is the leading advocacy organization, locally, for policies that will assist retirees and those who hope to retire. PSARA leads in the fight to preserve and expand Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and other policies that allow all people to live their senior years with dignity and respect. Revenue to expand Social Security benefits can be achieved by eliminating the income cap. Medicare benefits can be expanded to include dental, vision, and hearing by lowering the age of eligibility for Medicare thereby bringing a younger and healthier cohort into the program.

In 2017 PSARA delivered more than 30 presentations on the road map to "Making Retirement Security Real for Everyone". These presentations educate retirees, people hoping to retire, their families and communities about policy options to make it possible for people to retire with economic security, dignity, and respect. Emphasis is placed on how to use our democratic rights to achieve justice, equal rights and dignity for retired workers and all Americans.

PSARA is a diverse, multi-generational grassroots activist organization with 1300 members that was founded over 30 years ago. Many are retired activists from the labor movement and other progressive causes. Annual dues are just \$20 per year as a number of members live on fixed incomes. Many members donate more than the \$20 annual dues but revenue from members does not cover necessary expenses. Organizational income is supplemented by generous donations primarily from several labor unions who view our work as being valuable to their members.

PSARA publishes an outstanding 12 page monthly newsletter, The Retiree Advocate. It educates members about the fight to preserve existing defined benefit pensions, state and national policies that could make access to long term care more affordable, the struggle for affordable health care, access to affordable housing, transportation and other services while supporting a commitment to racial and gender equity and economic and climate justice and helping to build a caring and economically just community for all people.

One of PSARA's goals is building support for unions among our members and the broader community. While many PSARA members were or now are union members, many have not had the opportunity to experience union membership. We use the Retiree Advocate as a source of information and education on what we can do as a community-based organization to support the struggle for worker justice. PSARA has also engaged in numerous solidarity actions in support of our union sisters and brothers.

Motion: It is moved: The Northwest Council shall budget an annual \$1,000 contribution to the Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action, PSARA.