

# PRO TEC17

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**TO:** Co-Chairs Girod and Holvey  
Members of the Joint Subcommittee on Capital Construction

**FROM:** Elliot Levin, PROTEC17 Research Director and Legislative Advocate

**RE:** PROTEC17 Opposition to SB 1049

On behalf of the nearly 900 PROTEC17 represented employees of City of Portland, I write today in opposition to the PERS cuts contained in SB 1049. PROTEC17 represents a wide variety of professional and technical employees including engineers, planners, information technology specialists, and technicians who live and work in the Portland area. Additionally, we represent approximately 8,000 public sector employees across Washington State.

For the professional and technical professions our members hold, the private sector offers significantly higher wages, especially in engineering and information technology fields. However, for decades our members have collectively bargained for strong retirement, health, and safety benefits in lieu of high wages to match their private sector peers. The promise of such benefits has become a fundamental rationale for pursuing a career in public service.

The difficulty with financing PERS commitments was not caused by public employees, and we believe that it is fundamentally unfair to saddle them with the costs of fixing the system. The long-term plans of thousands of Oregonians who have devoted their lives to public service will be altered by cuts, and some will face extremely difficult choices as a result. Additionally, as the current generation of employees retires, Oregon's public agencies will be faced with an increasing need to attract the next generation of employees who will take up the mantle of public service and make the kind of long-term commitment that provides for institutional stability in the public sector. Maintaining retirement benefits are an investment in the future as well as a commitment to the present.

Thank you for your consideration, and we hope you'll join us in opposing cuts to public retirement benefits as outlined in SB 1049.



Elliot Levin  
Research Director and Legislative Advocate  
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