



National Conference on  
**Public Employee Retirement Systems**

*The Voice for Public Pensions*

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**Robert Podgorny**

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to take this opportunity—my last as President of the National Conference on Public Employee Retirement Systems—to thank the members, Officers and Executive Board for all of their hard work on behalf of NCPERS, and for giving me the great privilege of serving as president over the past 4 years.

During my tenure, we have made great strides on many fronts. Following are some of the highlights:

Our lobbying efforts of the past few years culminated in the passage of the HELPS Retirees Act as part of the Pension Protection Act. But we have not halted our efforts based on that legislative victory; in fact, we have been working to expand the HELPS Retirees provision to all public employees, with the help of affiliated organizations in Washington, including AFT, NEA, AFSCME and others.

We created the NCPERS Research Series, an occasional publication on matters related to public pensions. The first of the series, *The Top Ten Advantages of Maintaining Defined Benefit Plans*, was released in May 2007 and was followed earlier this year by a survey of NCPERS members and their efforts to address the implementation of GASB 45. NCPERS also partnered this year with Morningstar to undertake a study of the returns of NCPERS members compared with mutual funds.

In September of 2006 NCPERS held its first Public Sector Health Care Symposium and Exhibition in Chicago, followed in July 2007 with the inaugural Program for Advanced Trustee Studies, created in partnership with the Labor & Worklife Program at Harvard Law School and focused on providing an intensive and in-depth educational experience for seasoned trustees. Furthermore, in 2007 we formally took over the reins of the Public Safety Employees Pension & Benefits Conference. As a result, attendance jumped more than 100 percent in its first year under the auspices of NCPERS.

On another note, I am proud that as I leave office, we are meeting here in New Orleans, where a tragedy occurred 2 1/2 years ago, and that we have come together in the spirit of generosity to help the city as it continues to rebuild. The NCPERS Charitable Foundation was created for the very purpose of providing a small measure of support for this host city of New Orleans. Our fund and corporate members have responded with significant generosity—through small donations and large—and at the end of this Annual Conference when we announce the total amount of money raised for the Bridging the Gap Classroom/Library Makeover program, folks will be justifiably proud of their efforts.

In closing, let me again thank you for allowing me to serve as President of NCPERS. This organization has a great future ahead of it. I am proud to have led it during this period of expansion, and I look forward to continuing my involvement as a Past President.

Robert Podgorny  
NCPERS President