



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Building on Success of WRS:**  
*We Demand Secure Retirement for All Workers*

[A new report, issued by the Wisconsin Department of Administration](#), has proved once again that the Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) is one of the most stable and prosperous pension plans in the nation. The report, as mandated by Governor Walker's Act 32, stated that Wisconsin's pension system is fiscally solid and in no need of any alterations. The report also stated that further changes, such as switching to a 401K-style model, would increase risks of lower returns and potentially destabilize the system.

SEIU Healthcare Wisconsin (SEIU HCWI) congratulates the Wisconsin Retirement System on its continued success and calls upon the state to expand the system. SEIU HCWI Vice President Bruce Colburn says, "All workers, both private and public, should have the chance to participate in a defined-benefit plan and share in the dream of a secure retirement. The WRS doesn't just help Wisconsin employees, nearly 90% of retirees continue to live in Wisconsin after retirement and contribute to Wisconsin's economic welfare through the monies they spend in their communities."

"My defined-benefit plan through the WRS, offers me a guaranteed annuity of about \$1,000 per month after 25 years of working to rehabilitate patients with mental illness," said SEIU-HCWI retiree member, Janie Harris, a Registered Nurse retired from Mendota Mental Health Facility in 2008.

"It's not a lot but it is the kind of security we negotiated for in exchange for making less than working in the private-sector. It's very challenging work and there must be an incentive to keep qualified professionals on the job," Harris added. "Wisconsin has one of the lowest tax burdens to support our pensions and has an efficient system because of the size of the system. I would encourage my fellow retirees and citizens to get behind the efforts to expand the WRS to everyone."

A recent study by the Pew Center on the states showed that the WRS is the best funded pension system in the country. Almost all public employees are enrolled in the system for a total enrolment of 572,000. Wisconsin has the 9<sup>th</sup> largest pension system in the United States and the 30<sup>th</sup> largest in the world. The system is so efficient that a recent study showed Wisconsin taxpayers pay just 1.3% of total state and local taxes to support the WRS, less than half the average burden of 2.9% nationally.

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*SEIU Healthcare Wisconsin is Wisconsin's largest healthcare workers union, representing 15,000 home care, nursing home, social service, and hospital workers across the State of Wisconsin. Focused on uniting workers in healthcare, public services and property services, SEIU members are winning better wages, healthcare and more secure jobs for our communities, while uniting their strength with their counterparts around the world to help ensure that workers—not just corporations and CEOs—benefit from today's global economy.*