

CORRE Newsletter

MAY, 2024 EDITION



Who We Are:

CORRE (pronounced “core”) is an acronym for the *Coalition of Oak Ridge Retired Employees*, which was established in 2002 to represent the interests of some 15,000 retirees and surviving spouses. CORRE is not-for-profit (501 (c)(5) corporation, run by volunteers and managed by an elected board of directors. Our mission is to protect, preserve, and enhance the retirement benefits of its members and their surviving spouses. CORRE works with contractors, the Department of Energy, local and state officials, congressional representatives, and other related organizations to secure fair, just, and equitable retirement benefits for all eligible retirees. All retirees are considered *de facto* members of CORRE. and are welcome to participate in CORRE activities regardless of whether they were formerly hourly, management, monthly, or weekly employees.

You can become a **contributing member** by making a one-time \$20 donation to CORRE. This entitles you to vote in our annual meetings. We encourage all contributing members to provide your contact information to CORRE. We use your street address (zip code) to determine your congressional district. We may occasionally send you email to inform you of important issues that could affect your pension or healthcare benefits (or to remind you when a new newsletter is available on our website). **We do not share your contact information with anyone in a way that identifies you by name.**

Why Publish a Newsletter?

Newsletters are expensive, especially if they are distributed by postal mail. They will require an ongoing commitment from CORRE volunteers to create interesting, informative, and useful content. We already have a very good website (<https://www.mycorre.org>), which is our primary means of communicating with our members and stakeholders. So, an obvious question is “Why bother with a newsletter?”

Although CORRE has been around for more than 20 years, many Oak Ridge retirees and current employees have never even heard of CORRE. We recently formed a communications task team to find ways to increase retiree awareness of CORRE so that we can better serve our members. We decided that we could create newsletters to keep members informed of potential changes to pension and medical benefits, and to draw attention to the need for cost-of-living adjustments to our pensions. Newsletters can also provide other fresh, compelling content that will increase traffic to our website.

Due to high mailing costs, we have decided to distribute our newsletters through our website rather than by postal mail. (A few *printed* copies may be available at places like public libraries or credit union lobbies for retirees who do not use the internet or don’t have access to a computer.)

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A Message From Our CORRE President, Dave Whitehead

Welcome to the May 2024 edition of our CORRE newsletter. Although CORRE published newsletters several years ago, they were discontinued due to the rising cost of distributing them by postal mail. Beginning with this issue, we plan to publish a newsletter quarterly and make it available on our website. We hope you find it interesting and informative. We welcome your comments and suggestions. Please email them to:

communications@mycorre.org.

Many of you may have recently received a flyer in the mail from an organization called **CNSCares**. CNSCares* provides critical nursing and home healthcare services to former nuclear industry workers who are covered by the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Act, which is administered by the U. S. Department of Labor. You can read more about CNSCares on [their website](#).

Although CORRE has no affiliation with CNSCares (or any other healthcare provider), we would like to thank them for supporting CORRE's effort to re-launch our member newsletters. By highlighting our [CORRE website](#) and our on-line newsletter in their recent flyer, they are making our members aware of these resources and saving CORRE the cost of sending notifications by postal mail.

* (Despite the name similarity, CNSCares is not affiliated with *Consolidated Nuclear Security, LLC*, the current Y-12 operating contractor.)



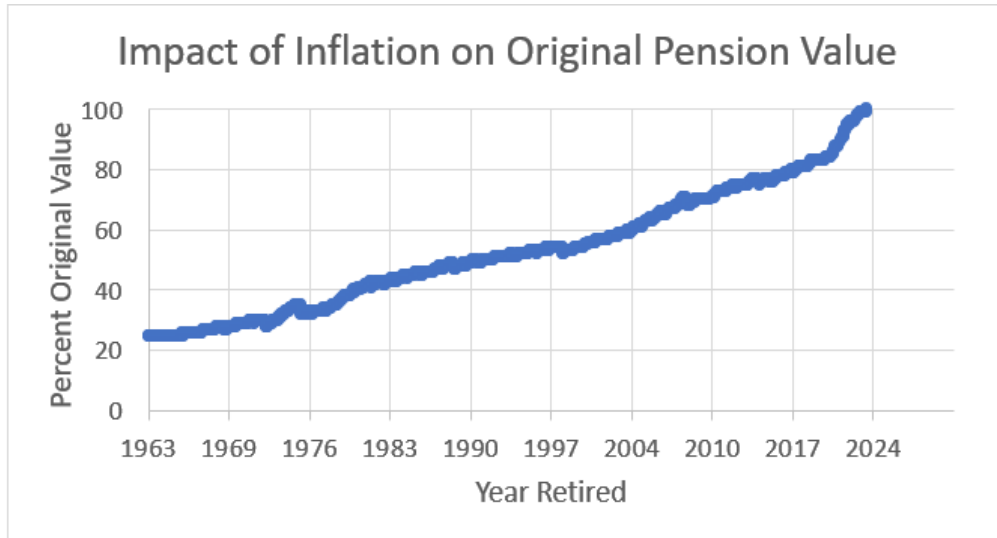
Spotlight on the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA)

“The Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA) was enacted in October 2000. Part B of the EEOICPA, effective on July 31, 2001, compensates current or former employees (or their survivors) of the Department of Energy (DOE), its predecessor agencies, and certain of its vendors, contractors and subcontractors, who were diagnosed with a radiogenic cancer, chronic beryllium disease, beryllium sensitivity, or chronic silicosis, as a result of exposure to radiation, beryllium, or silica while employed at covered facilities.” (Source: U.S. Department of Labor, [Office of Workers' Compensation Program website](#).) There is a wealth of information about this program on the website.

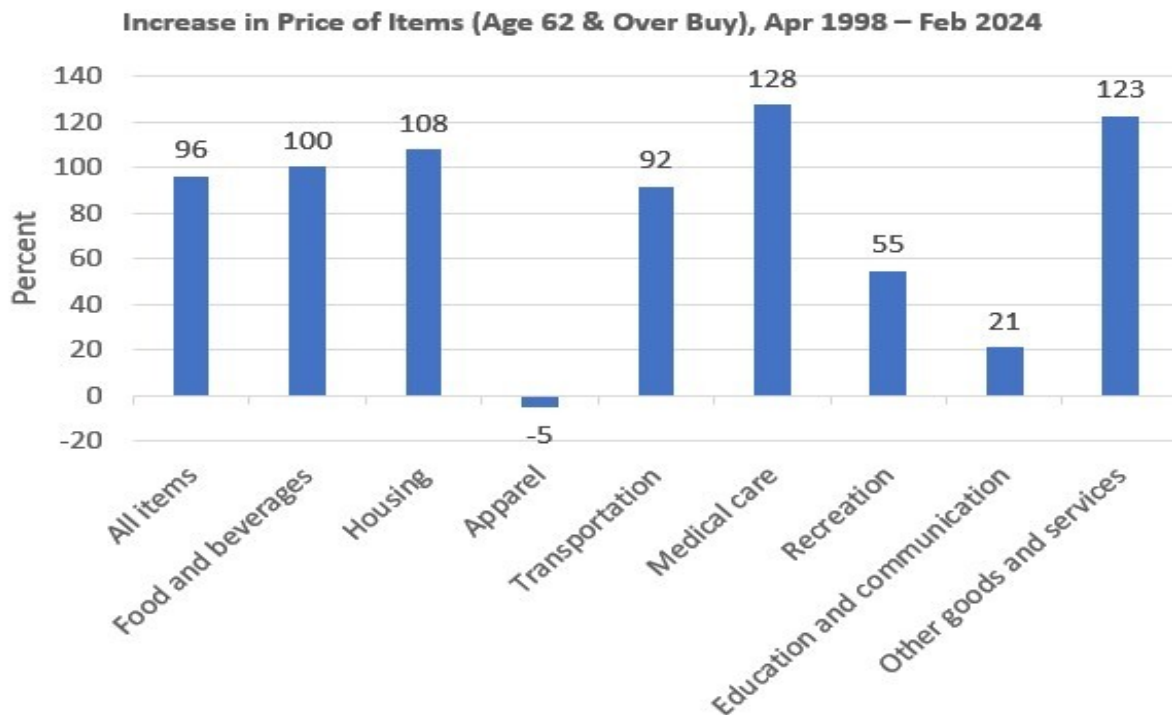
Every person approved for compensation or benefits under the EEOICPA receives a special Medical Benefits Identification card. It is known as the *White Card*. Details are available on the above website. There is also an excellent article on a local Knoxville Area Community Action Committee website entitled [Do You Have A White Card?](#) Not all CORRE members are eligible, but those who are should be aware of white cards and the benefits they offer.

How has inflation impacted Oak Ridge Retirees?

The chart below demonstrates how inflation has impacted Oak Ridge retirees. According to the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), \$1.00 in April 1998 needs to be \$1.91 as of February 2024 to have the same purchasing power.



As shown below, the impact is even more dramatic according to another index, the Research Consumer Price Index (R-CPI-E) for Americans age 62 and older.



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Research Consumer Price Index for the Elderly

What CORRE *Does* for Our Members...

In our effort to safeguard and improve retiree pensions and medical benefits for our members, CORRE communicates with human resources staff members and management from Department of Energy (DOE) Oak Ridge contractor facilities. We communicate with retiree organizations at other DOE sites throughout the nation. We also monitor and review proposed contract, pension, and benefit changes at those facilities. Last but not least, we communicate with Tennessee's congressional delegation. They are the source of funding for all DOE facilities, and they have some control over how those funds are used. We have access to staff members of senators Blackburn and Hagerty, and congressional representatives Burchett (District 2) and Fleischmann (District 3).

What CORRE *Wants* for Our Members...

CORRE's most recent presentation to the Tennessee's Congressional delegation requests the following:

- One-Time Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) to correct pension payment inflation losses incurred since 1998.
- Mandate future year annual pension payment COLAs to be the same each year as received by DOE Federal retirees. (Since 1998, Civil Service Retirement System retirees have effectively received 90.6% COLAs and Federal Employees Retirement System retirees 71.6% COLAs.)
- Extend 2% flat rate reduction to obtain the Surviving Spouse Option to all Oak Ridge contractor retirees.
- Reinstate lost health care benefits to a small group of "Proforce" retiree spouses.
- Provide full funding (100% of liabilities) to DOE's Oak Ridge contractor retiree pension fund obligation within 5 years.

CORRE Needs Your Help

I. Please Update Your Contact Information!

CORRE currently has over 7,000 retiree member names in our database. However, the majority are missing either your email address, your phone number, or your street address, including zip code. *We will never share this with other organizations in a way that reveals your name.*

Why do we need all of this information? We need the address information (including zip code) to determine which congressional district you live in. When CORRE meets with congressional staff members, it is extremely important to be able to tell them *how many of their constituents* are CORRE members. Having your street address and zip code enables us to provide an accurate answer. Most of our communication with you will be done via email, our website and our newsletter. Please take a minute and update your contact information (preferably by sending an email, to communications@mycorre.org). Please provide the information shown below.

II. Become a Contributing CORRE Member

All CORRE board members are volunteers, and receive no compensation for their work. All retirees from Oak Ridge DOE contractor facilities are considered *de facto members* of CORRE. By making a one-time contribution of \$20, you will become a *contributing member*, and will be entitled to vote in our annual meeting. Your contribution will help CORRE defray the cost of maintaining a website, conducting our annual meeting, and other operating expenses. Just send your check for \$20, along with the following contact information:

Name: (First, middle name or initial, Last)

P.O. Box or Street Address

City, State and Zip Code

Phone (Please include area code)

Email

Retired From:

Y-12 X-10 K-25 ProForce

Year you Retired: _____

Mail to: CORRE Treasurer
 P.O. Box 4266
 Oak Ridge, TN 37830-4266

Prepare and Send Emails or Letters to Your Congressional Members

In your request for their support for adjustments to our retiree benefits, letters in your own words are the most effective. Your letter should express how inflation has impacted your finances and quality of life in retirement. (If you prefer, you can also use the template form letter below.)

The Honorable Marsha Blackburn
357 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D. C. 20510
<https://www.marshablackburn.senate>

Representative Tim Burchett
1122 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, D. C. 20510
<https://burchett.house.gov>

The Honorable Bill Hagerty
248 Russell Senate Bldg.
Washington, D. C. 20510
<https://www.hagerty.senate>

Representative Chuck Fleischmann
2187 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510
<https://fleischmann.house.gov>

(Template/Form Letter)

Dear (Congressional Representative),

Our Coalition of Oak Ridge Retired Employees (CORRE) board of directors recently submitted a request for legislative corrective action concerning needed improvements to our pension and health care benefits for retired Oak Ridge nuclear workers. There are about 15,000 former Department of Energy (DOE) retirees and spouses, most of which live in Tennessee and are your constituents.

Our retirement and health benefits have eroded significantly over the past several years due to ever increasing inflation. No cost-of-living adjustments have been made since 1998 for those who worked for many years for the DOE as contractor employees at the Oak Ridge nuclear complex. The cost of living has nearly doubled since then!

(Add anything you wish regarding how inflation has affected you personally here.)

It is my request that you please be a champion and sponsor for this legislative corrective action request from our retiree organization (CORRE), which represents your Oak Ridge nuclear worker constituents. This legislation, if passed, will honor those who have worked for the DOE as contractors for so many years and made sacrifices for the country we have served.

Thank you so much for your support on this issue and for your service to our country and our state.

(Retiree signature and address)

Some Oak Ridge retirees live outside Tennessee congressional district 2 (Burchett) or district 3 (Fleischmann). If you don't already know your representative's name, you can determine it by visiting [this web site](#) and entering your zip code. In some cases, you will also need to enter your street address.

Upcoming Events

Dogwood Arts Festival

April 26-28 10 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Performance Lawn at the Park

963 World's Fair Park Drive, Knoxville, TN

Established in 1961, the Dogwood Arts Festival is one of the most celebrated cultural events in Knoxville! The festival is held on the beautifully redesigned Performance Lawn at the World's Fair Park. During the weekend of April 26-28, there will be over 100 fine art vendors, live music, entertainment, children's activities, food & beverage vendors, and more. For more info and a complete list of events, please go to dogwoodarts.com.

K-25 Reunion

April 27 12 Noon – 3 p.m.

652 Enrichment Street, Oak Ridge, TN

There will be a reunion of all former and current workers on April 27 at the K-25 Site just outside the History Museum (old Fire Department). For info call 865-804-2723. To register please go to the Facebook page entitled: [K-25 Retirees and Past Employees](#). There will be food, beverages, and music provided.

Quality Private Duty Care Coffee and Desserts

Thursday, May 23, 2024, 8:3 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

201 S. Tulane Avenue

Oak Ridge, TN

Quality Private Duty Care patients and former nuclear workers are invited to join us for a delightful combination of coffee and desserts. Honoring and remembering all those who served!

CNSCares June Resource Fair

Lunch & Learn Event

June 13, 2024

Museum of Appalachia

2819 Andersonville Hwy., Clinton, TN

The fair starts at 11:30 a.m. Lunch will be provided. Attendees can visit vendor booths, and can tour all the Museum's features before or after the event. There is no cost to participate. *Please RSVP to 865-432-2618.*

Nominations for 2025 CORRE Board

It's time to consider nominations for next year's CORRE Board of Directors. The Nominating Committee endeavors to select persons who have the expertise, contacts, and skills needed to achieve the CORRE purposes and who have no interest that is in conflict with the objectives, purposes, and political limitations of CORRE. The terms of several Board members will expire December 31, 2024, and nominations will be accepted between now and July 1, 2024 for consideration to serve in 2025. If you would like to nominate yourself or another retiree, please send a very brief summary of your or the person's work experience to Paul Wasilko, Chair, Nominating Committee.

By email: <mailto:pwasilko1@comcast.net>, or

By postal mail to: **Paul Wasilko**
Chair, Nominating Committee
981 Hamilton Lane
Kingston, TN 37763

If you are nominating another retiree, that person must have agreed to serve, and must be a Contributing Member of CORRE. The nomination information must be received by Paul Wasilko by July 1, 2024, and will be reviewed by the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee's proposed list of 2025 Board members will be posted on the CORRE website and sent by email to members by August 1, 2024.

If someone misses the July 1 deadline or was not chosen by the Nominating Committee, but is interested in serving on the Board, they may pursue nomination by petition by obtaining the names of 30 CORRE Contributing Members on a Petition for Nomination and submitting it by September 1, 2024, to the Nominating Committee Chair as shown above. Petitions for Nomination will be available on the CORRE website (mycorre.org). Nominations from the floor at the Annual Meeting in early November 2024 are not allowed.

Coming in the August Edition of CORRE Newsletter

The CORRE board has considered establishing our own social media (Facebook) group for our members, but we've decided instead to encourage CORRE members who are interested to participate in one (or more) of the excellent existing groups for Oak Ridge retirees and current employees. In our next newsletter, we plan to describe several available social media groups that may be of interest to our members. We hope you enjoyed the resumption of our newsletter, with this, our May newsletter edition. We plan to publish one every quarter if there is enough interest.