

SDSEO 101

Q: What is the South Dakota State Employees Organization?

A: The SDSEO is a 501c (6) labor non-profit. The SDSEO is a non-profit organization that looks out for the common business interests (policies of compensation and benefits and workplace) of South Dakota state government employees. (Specific information about the 501c (6) category can be found here in this IRS document: <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-tege/eotopick03.pdf>.)

Q: How do you “look out for the common interests of South Dakota state government employees? What is involved with this? Is it year-round?

A: We “look out” by employing a registered lobbyist, our executive director, during the Legislative session, and by attending and monitoring interim session meetings and staying abreast with government employee issues year-round. To get the word out and make sure the facts are presented, we do multiple media interviews a year and during the session with the Associated Press, South Dakota Public Broadcasting, radio stations, and newspapers from across the state.

Q: When was the SDSEO formed? Who formed it?

A: The SDSEO was formed in 1972 by state government employees seeking a voice in the Legislature.

Q: What is SDSEO lobbying like? Is it like lobbying in the movies or on the national or cable tv news?

A: SDSEO lobbying in South Dakota is totally unlike that portrayed in the movies and the national and cable tv news. Actually, almost all state lobbying is really about educating. South Dakota has a part-time Legislature for the most part. Most legislators have no staff or assistants to help them, and all legislators are just regular people, with excellent knowledge in certain areas, some knowledge in others, and zero knowledge in yet others. Most state lobbyists spend a lot of time educating legislators about their issues, and the rest of the time trying to make sure the education lasts long enough to get their votes through. There are lots of retirees and business owners and farmers and lawyers and doctors who are legislators, but there are zero state employee legislators. (That last part is something we want to change. Roxanne Weber, Pierre, gave it a go in the GOP House primary in District 24 in 2018 but didn't make it to the general election.)

Q: Can you name any accomplishments?

A: Heck, we almost have more accomplishments than we can list. But we can start with the South Dakota Retirement System. Two items were of utmost importance to the SDSEO when it began: 1) A career service system, and 2) a consolidated retirement system. The Career Service Act passed in 1973 and the Consolidated Retirement Act passed in 1974. Every positive right and benefit that state government employees in South Dakota have today is courtesy of SDSEO work. And we only have to go back to last session, Jan.-March 2018, to recall that after entering the session with a 0.0% raise proposal from the governor's office, we managed to make some progress and secured a 1.2% raise. But there's so much more, really, so much that we have a publication just for our accomplishments. You can find it here:

[https://sdseo.org/media/sdseoorg/documents/SDSEO%20Accomplishments%20\(July%202018\).pdf](https://sdseo.org/media/sdseoorg/documents/SDSEO%20Accomplishments%20(July%202018).pdf).