

RPA LEGISLATIVE CORNER REPORT:

Alliance of Public Retiree Organizations of New York – April 5, 2016 – LOBBY DAY

LOBBY DAY REPORT:

- We changed the annual Lobby Day from the time honored day in May every year. We were able to secure the **3rd Floor Terrace in the LOB, on April 5th which as it turned out was an active session day for the Legislature.** We had a very good turn-out of 52 members and each participant was given a Lobby Day Talking Points form with our bills listed and other legislation we support along with a second sheet referred to our target list of politicians to thank for submitting our bills and request their continued support and both Leaders of the Senate and Assembly's office room numbers to encourage them to pass our bills. ***The overall feedback I received was that this was the best LOBBY DAY members have attended in the last 10 years and the majority of Legislators spoke to our members and made time for photos as well.*** Thank you very much to everyone who participated and to RPA President Kevin Hassett, National 10-13 President Tony Perrone and other groups for sending ZAP letters to all the Legislator's Offices promoting our bills! We definitely were taken notice of by the Legislators, that we were in the LOB that day and it clearly showed.

Alliance of Public Retiree Organizations of New York – April 19, 2016 meeting:

LEGISLATIVE REPORT:

- We have concluded a very extensive review process of two of our bills for needed amendments;
 - S3320 / A3539 - Prohibits the Diminution of Health Insurance Benefits
 - S5065A / A7534 - Relates to Supplemental Military Retirement Allowances

Briefly; It was discovered that both of the above listed bills needed minor verbiage changes to fully cover all retirees, as these bills were originally crafted and written some twenty plus years ago. Had these two bills passed back then, they would have been applicable to all future retirees. In the bills present verbiage format and due to these bills not being signed into law, there were filing time restrictions and a lack of retro-active coverage for many retirees. Subsequently, our amendments being submitted to the bill sponsor's Legislative Directors, who all have agreed that these amendments are needed, will eliminate these problems and benefit all retirees now and in the future. Kudos and thanks to the review members for their expertise !

- Update; Governor Cuomo had alluded prior to his 2016 State Budget, that he wanted to put in place an expanded Veteran's bill for active and retiree Veterans to be part of his 2016 NYS Budget. This idea he had came after the Governor vetoed the active Veteran's Bill twice, with one of those vetoes on Veteran's Day ! As of this date, the Governor has failed to do this combined bill for Veterans, has removed the line item from his 2016 Budget and once again the Governor shows his total disregard to all military veterans, active and retired !
- The Nassau County Police Conference has created a state wide signature petition, designed to stop Governor Cuomo who wants to diminish Workers Compensation Benefits and coverage. Please go to www.moveon.org to sign this important petition online, whether you are retired or not and have your family members do the same, on behalf of all present workers and those who are out on W/C Disability related injuries that require life-long medical care for their job related injuries, as they will also be affected.

Alliance of Public Retiree Organizations of New York – May 17, 2016 meeting:

GUEST SPEAKER: NYS Senator Diane Savino (IDC)

- Senator Savino who is one of the members of the (IDC) Independent Democratic Council spoke about her strong opposition to a Constitutional Convention and the Senator urged everyone to oppose it. Senator Savino is in favor of all three of our bills and feels retirees have been ignored too long. When the Senator was asked if a republican wins the Governor's Election will the IDC stay intact. Senator Savino advised us that the IDC is here to stay no matter who runs the governor's office. Senator Savino was very outspoken and supportive with regards to Veterans, Police Officers and Firemen.

Legislative Report:

- No Legislative action of any of our bills thus far. Amendments to Health Bill and Veterans Bill are in the process of being done (see April Legislative Report). COLA bill still lacks the NYC Actuary Report and without this report the bill will not move at all. No one can seem to give us an answer as to why the NYS Actuary is stone walling our bill from moving through the legislative process.
- FOILS were submitted to the New York State and Local Retirement System for the 2015 Pension Contribution Stabilization numbers and I have received a confirmation that our FOIL is being worked on and may take up to 60 days to complete. As soon as I have those updated numbers all our spreadsheets will be updated and distributed to all our member organizations for them to disseminate to each individual organizations members. I do anticipate the 2015 numbers will be greater than past.
- LOBBY DAY 2017 is already scheduled for April 18, 2017 on the 3rd floor Terrace next to the elevators.
- I was invited to attend and be part of a 3 person retiree panel at the PEF Statewide Retirees Convention, in Fairport, NY to field retiree questions from all the PEF Chapter Presidents in NYS.
- I was invited to attend as a guest speaker at the United Police & Fire Retirees of New York meeting in Syracuse, NY. The UPFRA is very active in the Alliance with their President Peter Ruszcak as the Alliance Treasurer and their Vice President Norris Ellenwood just retired from his position as the Alliance Secretary for many years. At the May Alliance meeting Norris was presented with a plaque to show our appreciation for his many years of hard work for the Alliance and all retirees across NYS.
- A vote was held with regards to the position the Alliance officially will take with regards to the upcoming Constitutional Convention. The motion was made to OPPOSE it and carried unanimously.

NEWS FLASH on May 31, 2016:

- **Finally Governor Cuomo signed into Law the Veteran's Buy Back Bill bearing bill numbers; S7160 / Larkin and A9531 / Paulin. This bill does not apply to already retired Veterans and only allows active Military members to apply to buy back up to 36 months before they retire. Our Veterans Supplementation Bill which bears numbers; S 5065A / Larkin and A7534 / DenDecker is still active and maybe now it will be somewhat easier for us to get our bill passed, as the active bill costs money out of the NYS Budget and our Supplementation Bill funding will come out of the NYSLRS Pension Fund money. Please continue to contact your legislators !**

- **Please help us as these bills are your bills, for all retirees and will improve and preserve the quality of your lives forever ! The Alliance has a 1,400,000 voter base...make your voices heard loudly in Albany, as you can make a huge difference by calling too if you can't visit your Legislator. The power is in the voter numbers ! Please take the time to call or write your Senators and Assembly members encouraging them to do the right thing for hard working, deserving retirees, pass these bills and get them signed into law. We need everyone's help to persuade the legislators to do what they were elected to do; Serve and protect the people, especially retirees on fixed incomes. When speaking to your legislator, stress the fact that you are a member of the RPA, which is affiliated with the Alliance which is the "largest organized group representing retirees in New York State" comprised of a 1,400,000 member voting power base and stress to your legislators that retirees always DO FOLLOW POLITICS AND ALWAYS DO VOTE IN EVERY ELECTION !**

" UNITED WE WILL PREVAIL --- DIVIDED WE WILL FAIL "

Legislative Report respectfully submitted by,

Bryant Kolner, RPA Legislative Representative & President of the Alliance of Public Retiree Organizations of New York