

Legislative Report 5/2017

The state legislative committee met March 26-27 to finalize their Legislative priority list for both the state and federal agendas. Below are the items that will be on the card and any bills already associated with them.

State Priorities:

Minimum Pension Bump Up

This bill would extend the minimum retirement allowance provided to long standing retired members of the New York State Teachers' Retirement System who retired prior to July 1, 1980 and increase the minimum retirement allowance for all such retirees to \$550 per year of NYS service up to a maximum of \$19,250.

A.06603 Brindisi

S.5329 Tedisco

Improve Pension COLA

NYSRTA supports making improvements to COLA legislation by raising the base benefit amount upon which the COLA is computed from \$18,000 to \$25,000. This change is long overdue.

A.06045 Steck

S.03306 Ritchie (Not likely to pass but need to start asking)

Ethics Reform

Over the years, we have had the pleasure of meeting with our local legislators, advocating for many issues. We have found them to be honest and ethical. We ask these same legislators to enact ethic reform bills that would remove and punish any colleagues whose actions jeopardize the trust and respect earned by the majority of our elected representatives.

NYSRTA supports meaningful ethics reform through the passage of legislation and referendum process.

Federal Priorities

Negotiation of Covered Medicare Part D Covered Drugs

Allow the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate covered Part D drug prices for Medicare Beneficiaries. Other Government programs, such as Veterans Administration, have been able to reduce drug prices through negotiation. Drug manufacturers were influential in getting the noninterference clause in the original 2003 part D law, the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003. The pharmaceutical industry has spent more on lobbying than any other industry since 1988. (Health Affairs Blog) **HR. 242 Welch** **S.41 Klobuchar**

Strengthening Social Security and Medicare Trust Fund

Support an increase to the average beneficiary of \$800 per year. Change the cost-of-living calculations to reflect the living expenses of Social Security beneficiaries. The Alliance for Retired Americans suggests we expand our earned Social Security benefits and base future COLAs on the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly (CPI-E). NYSRTA opposes any cuts to Medicare benefits. NRTA and National Institute on Retirement Security say to reform COLA to more accurately account for increases in inflation. **HR. 1114 DeFazio**

S.427 Sanders

Observation vs. inpatient for coverage under Medicare

To amend title XVIII of the Social Security act to stabilize and modernize the provisions of hospitalization services under the Medicare program. Although a federal law was passed requiring notification it has not been uniformly applied by hospitals and patients are still being surprised by having been listed as under observation. They are faced with excessive charges that should have been covered by Medicare and learn that entry into rehabilitation is denied as Medicare will not pay due to the observation status.

HR. 1421 Courtney

S.568 S. Brown

Feel free to contact your representatives and ask for their support on these issues.

I'm looking for Legislative Contact people from each unit that would be willing to go with me in meeting with our Legislators.