

Legislative Report Feb.2018

I need your help to get an updated list of legislative chairs from each county.

We had a conference call in December and one early February to finalize the Legislative priority list for both the state and federal agendas. Below are some of the items that will be discussed.

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.

Bill # and sponsor A.06603A Brindisi S.5329A 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.

Bill # and sponsor A.06045 Steck S.03306 Ritchie

For Ethics Reform

There is talk of term limit bills both for Senate and Assembly seats (this would take action for two years and a constitutional referendum) and talks of term limits of legislative leaderships (this could be done with bills passed in legislation). We will be seeking information from our Legislators on their feelings on these issues.

New York Health Act

NYSRTA has no official position on this legislation. However, at this point we have more questions than answers.

Primarily, how would passage of the New York Health Act affect our retirees? We will be seeking information from our Legislators on their opinion to why they would or would not support this.

Federal Priorities that we dealt with last year and will most likely continue to.

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.

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.

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.