

**At the State Level:**

- The final NY State budget included record increases in funding for school districts, which is very good for the protection of our retirement benefits like health insurance.
- Home health care and nursing home workers in NY State received an increase in their hourly wages. Not as much as we hoped for, but a good start. This should help with attracting new workers and retaining existing staff.
- There was a lot of interest in finding ways to attract more new teachers into the profession via the "Underrepresented Teachers of Tomorrow Teacher Recruitment and Retention Program", a follow up to the successful Buffalo "Grow Your Own" pilot program which removed many of the barriers for bringing new people into the teaching profession. This bill has already passed the Senate.
- There is renewed interest in creating an elder abuse registry, particularly with the new Governor indicating she will likely support the measure. Governor Cuomo vetoed bills on this subject previously.
- The state budget also included money to expand rural broadband and repeal the "fiber tax" on new broadband cabling.
- Legislators expressed interest in expanding K-12 civics education.

Bills have been introduced in the Assembly and the Senate to increase the COLA base amount by the rate of inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index.

**At the Federal Level:**

- The Inflation Reduction Act lowers prescription drug prices for Medicare participants, lowers monthly insulin prescription prices to \$35, allows Medicare to negotiate lower drug prices and caps annual prescription drug co-pays at \$2,000 for Medicare recipients. It also expands health insurance subsidies for those under the Affordable Care Act.
- The infrastructure bill that did pass includes money for rural broadband, road/bridge/school construction & repair.