

December 28, 2018

Dear Presidents and Chapter Members:

In January, the New York State Legislature will be back in session. We will be very busy pushing our National Legislative Agenda. We will need to recruit new senate sponsors for our Veterans (Retiree) Supplementation Bill and our COLA Bills, since our prior sponsors are no longer in the senate (as per my November 8, 2018 letter). As of this writing, the National 10-13, the Alliance of Public Retirees of N.Y. and its other organization members have been diligently working to secure new sponsors for the above two bills.

Our biggest concern is the Health Insurance Protection Legislation. You may say why? We are currently protected under the NYC Administrative Code (Intro580). But look at what has happened in NYS and around the United States. Even in N.Y.C., as I'm sure you recall, in 2017 the Municipal Labor Committee and unions agreed to increase some of our medical co-payments. As you know, retirees negotiated and fought hard for what we have. Many times we gave up other benefits and pay raises for health insurance. The Health Insurance Protection Bill states that the retirees will maintain the benefits they had when they retired. This is why we support this bill as it would set a precedent and, if it passes, would protect us against any changes attempted by N.Y.C. in its Administrative Code.

New York State, in the past, changed its Civil Service Laws causing their retirees to loose and then contribute payments for benefits. This is the reason we meet with legislators; to explain the benefits we achieved and were promised as active MOS, and why they must be maintained. Remember, ONCE RETIRED, the only recourse we have for protection is the legislators. Since the Taylor Law prohibits the active NYPD unions from representing retirees.

There have been no improvements to COLA since it was enacted. COLA was our motto and mission statement. COLA enhancement of any part of our COLA Bills comes out of the pension funds, and not out of taxpayers' pockets. The pension funds in NYS and NYC are not only solvent, but are making money, unlike in other states where the funds are misused and raided. At the September Alliance meeting in Albany, State Comptroller Tom DeNapoli stated that the pension plans are doing very well with 209 billion dollars; 11.35% investment return and are 98% funded for the last fiscal year.

The Veterans Supplementation Bill is designed for retirees who were unable to buy back veteran credits. This also comes directly out of pensions.

Sometimes we become complacent because, as you know, no changes have been made. But you can see what's going on, and this is a time to be very concerned about our Health Benefits, our Medicare Reimbursement and our COLA.

The National is proactive in legislation, through our PAC and political endorsements. We work very closely with other retiree groups throughout NYS and NYC. We have a close relationship with the RSA (Retired Sergeants Association). By the early part of the 2019 legislative session, we hope to have the bill numbers (as they become available) for all the bills mentioned, as well as the names of their sponsors. We're planning to have our members aggressively pursue these legislators to express our position and lobby them for their support. We will be going to Lobby Day in April in support of the Alliance of Public Retirees of NY.

The National Chapters have been very supportive of the National and its agenda. I am very grateful for your support as it makes us a recognized force of NYPD Retirees. To be successful, you need recognition, and to be able to do that, you have to attend meetings, write letters, and get out there and support your cause. I'm very fortunate to have an Executive Board that is actively involved regarding these issues. I want to thank all of my Board of directors and Chapter presidents for your input and involvement sharing the information with your members. January is coming and we'll be ready and we'll keep you updated on events as they occur.

Happy New Year to you all and your families.

Fraternally,

Frank Martarella

Cc: National Board of Directors