Resolution 1 – Submitted by RC 15/16
Behavioral Health
Whereas, mental and/or behavioral health is as important as medical health; and
Whereas, there is a documented mental and/or behavioral health crisis that has affected so many families and workplaces; and
Whereas, many of our members have not had adequate medical coverage for mental and/or behavioral health diagnosis and treatment; and
Whereas, high co-pays and deductible levels are making mental and/or behavioral health services unaffordable; and
Whereas, many public and private insurance plans do not provide for adequate mental and/or behavioral coverage; and
Whereas, both retirees and in-service members see the effects of this underinsurance; and
Whereas, members wish to encourage improvement of medical coverage for mental and/or behavioral health for all those who need it; therefore be it
RESOLVED, that NYSUT will seek legislation that will require medical insurance plans provide adequate and accessible coverage for mental and/or behavioral health diagnosis and treatment both for members and for all NYS residents; and be it further
RESOLVED, that NYSUT assist its locals with educating its members that they have the right to equitable access to mental and behavioral services; and be it further
RESOLVED, that NYSUT will encourage its local to bargain the inclusion of adequate and accessible mental and/or behavioral health coverage as part of a local’s medical package.

Resolution 2 - Submitted by RC10
NYSUT Urges that the New York State Teachers’ Retirement System (NYSTRS) to Divest from GEO Group Inc.
Whereas, the GEO Group Inc. (GEO), a Florida based company, owns or operates more than 130 prisons, immigration detention centers and community re-entry facilities in the United States; and
Whereas, GEO has been accused of health and safety deficiencies by United States Immigration Customs Enforcement in some of its sites; and
Whereas, according to a report from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, an inspection of a GEO group immigration detention facility discovered nooses hanging in cells as well as improper segregation; and
Whereas, Amnesty International has expressed great concern over reports of human rights violations in GEO facilities; and
Whereas, the United Nations’ Principles for Responsible Investment includes the consideration of a company’s environmental, social and governance impact when acquiring stock; and
Whereas, the Canadian Pension Plan Investment Board has sold its shares in GEO because of its concern, in part, for the treatment of young people and children; and
Whereas, a company under investigation for questionable practices may put its shareholders’ investments at risk; and
Whereas, in June 2019, Illinois became the first state to ban private immigration detention centers and, as of January 2020, California will ban for-profit prison and immigration detention centers in part because of health and safety deficiencies; and
Whereas, the California Public Employees Retirement System (CALPERS), the largest public pension fund in the United States is divesting from GEO; and
Whereas, the self-reporting on human rights abuses that the NYSTRS has requested from GEO is not monitored by an outside human rights entity and bears no consequences that have been stipulated; and
Whereas, NYSUT is an organization of caring professionals who continually prioritize the well-being of children and youth; and
Whereas, NYSUT members know the stress and trauma that abuse and mistreatment create, especially in children and young people; and therefore be it
RESOLVED, that NYSUT urge NYSTRS to divest its shareholdings in GEO and other similar private corrections industries.

Resolution 3 - Submitted by RC7
Disability Retirement
Whereas, the New York State Teachers’ Retirement System (NYSTRS) has a disability option available to members who qualify; and
Whereas, NYSTRS members who are no longer able to work and who qualify often receive a significantly reduced pension for the remainder of their life; and
Whereas, this pension can average approximately one-third of the member’s full salary and is often not a sufficient living wage; and
Whereas, qualifying for a disability retirement precludes a member from engaging in any other employment for the purpose of supplementing their income; and
Whereas, members of NYSTRS who are injured in the performance of their duties, resulting in the qualification for a disability retirement receive this same calculation; therefore be it
RESOLVED, that NYSUT seek legislation that would improve the disability pension calculation for members who are granted a disability retirement; and be it further
RESOLVED, that NYSUT consider seeking legislation that would allow a member who qualifies for a disability pension due to an injury in the performance of their duty to receive a more appropriate disability pension.

Resolution 4 - Submitted by RC7
New York State Teachers’ Retirement System Cost of Living Adjustment
Whereas, New York State has recently increased the state minimum wage; and
Whereas, the New York Teachers’ Retirement System announced that their retirement portfolio returned 9.0% for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2018; and
Whereas, the COLA percentage is calculated by taking 50% of the Consumer Price Index (CPI); and
Whereas, the COLA can be no less than 1% and no more than 3% annually; and
Whereas, the COLA can only be applied to the first $18,000 of retirement benefit; and
Whereas, the New York State Teachers’ Retirement System retirees must wait at least five years before they can start to collect any COLA; and
Whereas, the Teachers’ Retirement COLA, as currently written, does not all allow retiree participants to come close to the increase in the cost of living; therefore be it
RESOLVED, that NYSUT should work on behalf of their in-service and retired members to strongly lobby and urge the New York State Legislature and Governor to raise from 50% to 75% of CPI that is used to calculate the COLA; and be it further
RESOLVED, that the COLA be no less than 2% annually; and be it further
RESOLVED, that the COLA be applied to the first $30,000 of the retiree’s maximum retirement benefit; and be it further
RESOLVED, that the number of years a retiree must wait before collecting a COLA be three years for all retirees.

Resolution 5 - Submitted by RC17, RC18, RC19, RC20, RC21, RC22, RC23
Benefits in Retirement
Whereas, most retirees have benefits that were negotiated by their locals but do not, in most cases have a voice at the negotiating table; and
Whereas, employers looking to cut expenses may attempt to reduce or change retiree benefits; therefore be it
RESOLVED, that NYSUT promote training to local leaders to understand and protect retiree benefits and encourage consultation with retiree chapters and/or representatives.