

It's 2023 and We Need to Protect What We've Earned!

You've worked hard, dedicated your life to your students, your institutions, and colleagues, and you should not have to worry about losing any benefits you accrued during your career.

As I've mentioned before, all NYSUT retirees are NYSUT members for life and RC39 wants to ensure that every member is aware of the importance of staying connected.

We also need to make sure our local Inservice union leaders do NOT negotiate new benefits for current members at the expense of their retirees.

To help in these efforts, NYSUT Retiree Councils are preparing resolutions for the 2023 NYSUT Representative Assembly to encourage NYSUT to "seek to educate" locals to include input from retiree leadership as well as information on issues that will affect members as "retirees in training." In addition, there is a proposed resolution to protect retiree health insurance.

Collectively, working together and working with coalitions we can make sure we prevail. I remind you: Your political affiliation is not our concern. What is our concern is that we maintain the benefits we've earned. I had to mention "politics" because, as you know, both locally and nationally there are calls to make changes in Medicare and Social Security benefits and to cut taxes – probably at our expense.

VOTE/COPE - If you are in New York State Teachers' Retirement System (NYSTRS) or the New York State Employees' Retirement System (NYSERS) you can authorize NYSUT to have your pension system "deduct from each of my regular defined-benefit pension payments the following sum (\$ per month) and to forward that amount to VOTE-COPE..." It is easy. All you need to do is go to NYSUT.org, and in the upper right corner click on member login. Once logged in, click "take action" and click on VOTE/COPE.

Then you will see:

[Login to MyNYSUT to learn more or give to VOTE-COPE](#)

This link takes you to a secure login and you can sign up in no time.

I contribute this way, and every month I give to VOTE/COPE through pension deduction.

For those of you in an ORP (i.e., TIAA) retirement plan, NYSUT will have a way for retirees in these plans to have contributions made to VOTE/COPE sometime this year.

If you want you can make a one-time contribution to

This Right-Wing Think Tank is Hell-Bent on Defunding Public –Sector Unions. Is it working?

The Freedom Foundation, after the Supreme Court Janus decision of 2018 has gone after public sector unions in a big way. Teachers have been receiving mail from this group encouraging them to stop paying their union dues as a way to save money and increase their income.

The Foundation is raising money and has embarked on a major campaign starting in the west with California, Oregon, and Washington. They've expanded to Ohio and Pennsylvania, and in October reached into New York.

We know that the right wants to destroy unions - it's been our fight forever for our rights and power. It is our job and our responsibility to make sure our members understand how dangerous this campaign is. Has anyone you know been contacted? This information is from the website Portside which describes a teacher in Denver who got a card pointing out that he would save \$950 a year if he stopped paying dues. As it happened, his union had just settled a good contract including health benefits and he totally understood what was happening here. He said, "it would never occur to me to leave because of a mailer." We like to think our members are just as smart as this guy.

Brothers and Sisters, in unity is our strength. There is a lot of unionizing taking place across the country - it's a beautiful and amazing sight.

UNION STRONG.

Judy Wood, RC39 V.P.

VOTE/COPE using your credit card at NYSUT's secure site. Again, go to NYSUT.org, and in the upper right corner click on member login. Once logged in click "take action" and click on VOTE/COPE. Then select VOTE/COPE Online Deductions.

I appreciate your consideration for a V/C contribution(s). We need your support, input, and if you can spare a little time – "boots on the ground."

Please email me if you have any ideas and suggestions to help in our efforts to maintain what we have earned!

In Solidarity,
Kevin Peterman
President, RC39
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RC39 Website

Webmaster, **Peter Herron**: Website address: <http://rc39.ny.aft.org/>. RC39 constitution, recent RC39 newsletters and much more are posted on the RC39 website.

Get on the RC39 Email List

In order to receive RC39 notices and early colored RC39 newsletters, email your name, the community college from which you retired, your email address, mailing address, and phone number to rc39pete@optonline.net.

Address Change

Do not let a new address keep you from receiving NYSUT RC39 newsletters. There are four ways to update your address. Contact NYSUT Member Records at 1-800-342-9810 ext. 6224. Send written changes to: NYSUT Member Records, 800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110, or e-mail changes to memberec@nysutmail.org. or go to: <https://www.nysut.org/members/retirees/mailling-list>. If you are a snowbird, give Member Records a few weeks notice to change its address records each way.

RC39 Encourages its Members to Attend Regional Conferences

RC39 will pay a member's expenses, up to \$40, for attending a NYSUT in-person regional retiree conference. Check the RC39 website for details.

YOUR HEALTH CONNECTION

By Frances S. Hilliard, RN, MS

Professor Emerita, Nassau Community College

Scientific evidence is accumulating that certain lifestyle changes may help maintain cognitive fitness and reduce the incidence of dementia. This research has also demonstrated that individualized brain protective measures reduce cognitive decline in persons with significant risk factors such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes. So, although there are no guarantees that taking these measures will ward off dementia, everyone can do something to improve cognitive fitness. A recent major research study published in the British medical journal The Lancet suggests that certain factors within our control help delay or even prevent cognitive decline:

Monitor and manage your blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and blood sugar

Periodically review your medication regimen with your health care provider. Be sure to include over-the-counter drugs and herbal supplements. (Some drugs can impair memory and cognition, and may even be linked to a higher risk for dementia.)

Have your hearing evaluated. Age-related loss of hearing acuity is a factor in cognitive decline.

Get adequate sleep. (About seven hours a night seems to be ideal for the brain.)

Do not smoke! Use alcohol in moderation – no more than two drinks per day for men and one per day for women. However, research is beginning to suggest that any amount of alcohol use may be detrimental to the brain.

Get enough physical activity. Although 150 weekly minutes (30 minutes 5x week) of “moderately intense” physical activity, such as brisk walking, is the recommendation, any amount can have some benefits.

Choose a diet rich in fresh produce, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and healthy fats (found in avocado, fish, and olive oil). Flavonoids, found in apples, pears, and berries, help curb inflammation and cellular damage. Coffee and tea also contain flavonoids, as well as antioxidants, and 2-3 cups per day are suggested.

Spend time socializing. The quality and frequency of social interaction and support have a direct influence on brain health.

Engage your brain with a wide variety of cognitive activities. Challenge your brain by learning something new and/or teaching someone else a game or a skill. Solve puzzles, read, keep a journal, take a class.

(AARP has a “Staying Sharp” website with an assortment of activities to help maintain brain health: www.stayingsharp.aarp.org)

References

Harvard Health Publishing. “A Guide to Cognitive Fitness, 2022. www.health.harvard.edu/cogfit

Hallie Levine. “Boost Your Brain Power at Any Age”. Consumer Reports, Vol 87, No 6: June, 2022.

CR.org.

Heather McKay, PhD, OT/L. “What’s Dementia and What’s Not”. Artis Senior Living Webinar. June 7, 2022. <https://www.artisseniorliving.com>

Dr. McKay: www.pfhnc.com

This column is not intended as a substitute for medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. You are urged to seek the advice of a health care practitioner for any questions about your medical condition or treatment.

The Retirees Won

Editor's note: This article is from John Hyland, PCS/CUNY and Barbara Hafner, Long Island Federation of Labor, Executive Board, LIRDC - Chairperson, and RC 18 Vice-President. While this involves New York City retirees, there is a strong possibility that what was tried on NYC retirees will be tried on retirees throughout New York State. NYSUT, our union, is the only organization that will fight for us retirees if local school districts or community colleges try to take our well earned rights from us. Can you think of any better reason why retirees need to support NYSUT?

Last November, the Appellate Court, First Department found for the retirees. Like we said all along, we were going to win this case because the law is on our side, and we being retirees were very familiar with the statute and collective bargaining.

The Court unanimously agreed with the Supreme Court, that the City must pay the full cost of healthcare up to the HIP HMO rate for EVERY EMPLOYEE, RETIREE and their dependents.

We are retired City union labor. Many of us lobbied these laws, worked in offices where these laws were used over the decades. We know they protect active and retired labor EQUALLY. And have for over 55 years. It's not an "antiquated" or "outdated law." And this retirees' group that fought the City and MLC in this case, did what true labor does; organized, rallied, stood in solidarity, got out the word, hired good lawyers, won the support of some of our former unions, rallied, protested, and we won, every step of the way.

The UFT & DC37 has been distributing emails to active or in-service workers and their retirees telling them to call City Council and demand they change the Code. They don't want you to know you are demanding your own diminishment of healthcare!

To the in-service employees, have you researched the history of Administrative Code 12-126? Do you know why it exists and the protections it offers? Do you know if those protections exist anywhere else and why? Have you read either Court decision? Do you know the difference between Traditional Medicare and a Managed Medicare Advantage plan? If not, stop! And learn before you follow your peers "off a bridge" selling off your current and future health benefits. And tomorrow, thank a retiree for saving your benefits!

The fact is, the Municipal Labor Committee negotiated a bad deal and got themselves in a hole. And they sold off retirees to pay their debt. Are you okay with having your retiree benefit sold off? We warned you all last year if this deal was permitted to go through, they were coming after you (active in-service workers) next. You didn't listen. And today threatening retirees with increased premiums and loss of plans and blaming retirees for laws that protect what is legally earned by retirees and pitting active employees against retirees.

WE ARE UNION! WE ARE LABOR! WE ARE RETIREES! We will continue to fight to protect ourselves, and you, if we must! We know the laws we are protected by. Get on board, before the MLC takes your health plan, and narrows the networks for providers you can see, and imposes so many co-pays and prior authorizations, you will think you are in an HMO plan in 1980. Every time they agree to a \$30 co-pay, or you can only use a certain urgent care, or a certain radiology or a certain "network" or prevent you from going to a specific hospital, or requires approval for just about every test procedure your physician wants, that is a **GIVE BACK**. They are limiting your access to your own healthcare.

TODAY, thank a retiree, because they just saved you. Now let's hope the MLC chooses to get on the right side of the law and protect us all like they used to!

COURT DECISION

And because we like a good ONE - TWO Punch, we have filed another lawsuit against the City over the GHI Senior Care Co-pays and violating the Judge's order. [Read/follow that here!](#)

Note: the above links can be obtained by viewing this newsletter at the AFT/NYSUT/RC39 website: <http://rc39.ny.aft.org/>

Sivia Kaye, RC39 columnist died in 2022

Sivia served on the RC39 editorial board, helped design the newsletter format and, over many years, contributed many very witty and entertaining article to the newsletter. Her dedication and talents are greatly missed. Sivia Kaye's columns can be found in published RC39 newsletters located on the RC39 website, <http://rc39.ny.aft.org/>.





Name _____ e-mail _____
 Address _____ Phone (____) _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip code _____
 College retired from _____ Year of Retirement _____
 Please check amount of your voluntary participation fee: \$25 _____ Other \$ _____
 Send your check, made out to NYSUT Retiree Council 39, along with this completed form to:
 Ms. Joyce Gabriele, RC39 Treasurer, 492 Everdell Avenue, West Islip, NY. 11795-4222

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