



THE CENTRAL NEW YORKER

<http://nysutretireecouncil7.org/>

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A Sign of the Times

This is a sign that was outside many towns when I was growing up. On these signs, communities proudly showed the different service groups that were operating within them. Every town had them, including mine.

In our house, there was a very specific pattern to our evenings. My dad would come home from work, eat dinner, help with the dishes, and then, a number of nights a week, he would leave. And where he went was to a number of those organizations that were on the sign outside of our town. There, he met all kinds of different people. It's important to note that my dad had a great job; he was a scientist, and he made good money, and we had a really nice life. But the people who were in the groups with him came from many different backgrounds. There were professional people like doctors and lawyers, local businesspeople, tradespeople, teachers and people who worked in factories. And together, they did great things to support our community.

Sadly, the sign that was outside our town started to lose organizations. And today, these signs rarely exist because few of these organizations are not operating any longer. The reason is simple - life has changed. Not everybody has a really great job (not to mention benefits or a pension). They may have multiple jobs. Families must scramble to make ends meet, and they have very little time left over to dedicate to their communities.

Now imagine another picture. This picture is of a full room. It's a meeting of our retirees. These folks meet each month, and each month, different charitable, civic, and cultural groups visit to talk about the great work they do. And each month, these retirees listen attentively, volunteer, and almost always pass the hat to collect money for these local agencies.

This picture shows us something vital: the desire to serve hasn't died. The people who still have the time and the stability to contribute—our current retirees—are still stepping up. They're the ones holding together the civic fabric that others no longer have the bandwidth to maintain.

But here is the danger, and this is the core of our problem: The system that provided the security for these retirees to dedicate their time and resources—the stability that allowed them to volunteer, donate, and hold our communities together—that system is breaking.

The foundation of secure pensions that enabled one generation to be active citizens is eroding for the next. If we allow the pension system to fail, we not only risk the financial life of our young colleagues, but the collapse of the civic life that depends on the economic security of our citizens.

The point I am trying to make is this: The people with a secure pension and a reasonable timeline for retirement have the ability to give back to their community. And as we look around, we find that there are fewer and fewer people who have those things.

So, when we advocate for Fixing Tier 6 - it's absolutely about putting more money in the pockets of our young colleagues and giving them a path to a reasonable retirement. But it's also about something much bigger: It's about helping our communities have folks available to make our communities stronger.

We're not just fighting for an amount on a paycheck or a date on a calendar. We're fighting to restore the economic stability that turns a worker into an active, engaged citizen—the kind of citizen my dad was, and the kind of retiree we see meeting every month. We're fighting to restore the conditions that allow people to move from scrambling to survive having the time and resources to serve.

This isn't a financial policy debate alone; it's a debate about the future health of our democracy and our communities. Right now, the most urgent action we can take is to Fix Tier 6. Created over a decade ago, Tier 6 asks our newest public servants to work longer, contribute more, and ultimately receive far less than their colleagues who came before them. It's a system that demands so much of our people that it effectively strips them of the time and the resources needed to participate in civic life. We are not just advocating for a pension check; we are advocating for the return of the engaged citizen.

Let's Fix Tier 6. Let's restore the security that empowers service. Let's make sure the next generation of retirees has the ability not just to survive, but to truly *live* and give back!

Phil Cleary, a NYSUT retiree from North Syracuse and RC 7 VP, serves as NYSUT Political Action Coordinator and on boards of the NYS AFL-CIO Area Labor Federation and the Greater Syracuse Labor Council.



NOW IT'S TIME FOR THE BIGGEST ACTION YET!

On March 8, 2026, at the MVP Arena in Albany, join 10,000+ of your fellow NYSUT members for our largest, most powerful Fix Tier 6 rally yet.

Check nysut.org for more details!



From the President's Desk...

Loretta K. Donlon

Today's column is from Bill Spreter, RC7 Vice President and NYSUT Regional Vote-Cope Chair

Life is not fair! Children hear that from parents and teachers when things don't go their way. We were told that even as adults. But, according to pollster Frank Luntz, Americans value Fairness. In an academic exercise he posed the following questions (paraphrased), for example, he says, is it fair that some children born to billionaires will never have to work a day in their lives while others work two or three jobs just to put food on the table? Is it fair that some schools have all the technologies while others struggle just to buy books and chalk? Should everyone who plays by the rules and works hard have a chance at the American dream?

NYSUT, like most Americans, believes in FAIRNESS. We believe in Fairness when we hold rallies to Fix the Tier 6, a pension plan that penalizes our newest teachers.

NYSUT believes in Fairness when we fixed the APPR teacher evaluation plan billed as a one size fits all panacea for all that ails education and when we lobbied the legislature to increase Foundation Aid so that all schools get a fair share of funding for students.

NYSUT believes in Fairness when we pushed for free school lunches for students – a well-fed student can learn, and when we established heat regulations in schools - oppressive heat halts learning.

NYSUT believes in Fairness by advocating for social media laws, restricting cell phone use in schools. Teachers report improved learning environments.

And finally, NYSUT believes in Fairness not only for Older Americans but for all by advocating against Federal cuts to social security, Medicare, Medicaid, Veterans, Education, Labor rights, cancer research, and more.

Yes, life is not fair, but when we join our union, NYSUT, in advocacy, life just gets a little fairer. And isn't fairness an American value to which we all aspire?

You are NYSUT. You can advocate in many ways: calling, writing, emailing your representatives; attending phone banks for advocacy or in elections; attending rallies and/or marches; inspiring your friends to vote and take action; and increasing your own contributions to Vote-Cope.

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NYSUT Retiree Council 7

NYSUT, AFT, NEA, AFL-CIO

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Loretta Donlon, ED 51 Director

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Forever in our Hearts...

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Marcellus

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Join Us on **Tuesday, December 9, 2025**, at
Bellevue Country Club, 1901 Glenwood Ave., Syracuse

\$39 per person

Registration @ 11:30 • Meeting @ noon • Lunch @ 12:45 • Program after Lunch



Seasonal Entertainment

Entrée Choices:

Grilled Salmon with rice and dill beurre blanc
Sauteed Chicken Breast with tomatoes, lemon crème sauce
Farfalle Primavera with seasonal vegetables

All entrees served with:

Garden Salad, Rolls and Butter
Water, Tea, Coffee Chocolate Mousse

Vegetarian and Gluten-Free available upon request.

Reservation Form RC 7 Luncheon – December 9, 2025 @Bellevue Country Club

Name _____ Phone _____

Email _____

If you require any device or accommodation as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act, or need a vegetarian, vegan, or gluten-free meal or other dietary accommodation, please contact Mary Duffin at mduffin2@verizon.net

Number of reservations _____ at \$39. Amount enclosed \$ _____ Check # _____ Cash _____

Please circle entrée choice below. If including multiple reservations, indicate names clearly next to choice.

Grilled Salmon

Chicken Breast

Farfalle Primavera

****First Time Attendee? _____ District Retired From: _____**

We'll make sure you find your colleagues!

Please send reservation form and a check payable to **NYSUT RETIREE COUNCIL 7** to:
RC7 Luncheon Chair, NYSUT Regional Office, 4983 Brittonfield Parkway, E. Syracuse, NY 13057
Reservations must be received by December 2. No one can be seated without a reservation.

Retiree Council 7 Membership Form 2025 - 2026

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

District retired from _____

Position _____

Active membership in Retiree Council 7 is open to every NYSUT retiree of any NYSUT represented group in Election District 7 (Cayuga and Onondaga counties). Active members are those who have paid RC 7's participation fee of \$10 per year and, if required by the local, payment of their local's retiree fees.

*Retirees from **Jordan Elbridge, Liverpool, North Syracuse, Port Byron, Syracuse City**: your combined fees (local's and RC7's) are collected by your local's retiree group and RC7's portion is forwarded to us. Use your local's address when sending in your check.*

*Retirees from **Auburn, Cato-Meridian, C-O BOCES, Moravia, Skaneateles, Southern Cayuga, Union Springs, or Weedsport**: your fees are collected by CORN and forwarded to RC 7. Send your check to CORN @Auburn Teachers Association.*

*Retirees from **other locals** should send their \$10 check to NYSUT, attn RC 7 Membership Chair, 4983 Brittonfield Pkwy, East Syracuse, 13057.*

PACK YOUR BAGS AND SAVE!



With Member Benefits

Do the colder temperatures have you longing for a little getaway?

NYSUT Member Benefits endorses several programs that can help with all your travel plans, including MB Discounts & Deals, Grand Circle Travel & Overseas Adventure Travel, and Purchasing Power.

MB Discounts & Deals offers NYSUT members exclusive access to savings at over 850,000 popular hotels and resorts worldwide along with flights, vehicle rentals, theme parks and attractions, Broadway shows and museums, sporting events and concerts, movie tickets, ski tickets, restaurant dine-in or take-out, and so much more. If you have not already done so, you can create an account at mbdeals.enjoymydeals.com with a preferred email address, a password, and your seven-digit NYSUT ID number (which can be found at nysut.org/memberid).

Does your bucket list include taking an unforgettable excursion to Asia, the South Pacific, Mediterranean, Africa, Europe, or numerous other destinations? NYSUT members save at least \$150 per person on published

Grand Circle Travel & Overseas Adventure Travel tours along with the opportunity to save thousands per trip with additional discounts and savings. GCT & OAT provide the chance to become fully immersed in the culture of the region you are visiting, including lesser-known locations that most Americans never get to experience. Discovery opportunities, activities, and educational discussions are included with each trip.

With **Purchasing Power**, eligible NYSUT members can package their entire vacation together – including hotels, flights, attractions, vacation rentals, and cruises – while paying over 12 months through payroll deduction or Automated Clearing House (ACH) withdrawals. Purchasing Power is not a discount program, but offers no credit check and no down payments; it serves as an option over traditional financing options like high-interest credit cards.

SCAN ME



Explore all that is available to you from Member Benefits by scanning the QR code, visiting mb-nysut.org/travelmb, or calling 800-626-8101.