



THE CENTRAL NEW YORKER

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REGIONAL POLITICAL UPDATE

by *Ian Phillips*

Even as the temperatures stay cold, the legislative season in Albany and Washington is heating up. As I write, the Senate and House look poised to pass a nearly \$2 billion COVID stimulus package designed to increase testing, access to vaccines, give nearly every American a stimulus check, and drive sorely needed resources to schools, hospitals, and local governments.

New York's schools and institutions of higher learning are counting on this stimulus. Unfortunately, Governor Cuomo's early budget draft takes money from school districts and fills in the hole with federal stimulus dollars. While, in the short term, this results in no loss of funds for most districts, the stimulus funds will not be there next year. The state is creating another version of the GAP elimination adjustment, a multi-year spending cut to school districts. NYSUT is doing all it can to make our legislators know that this is unacceptable. In order to address the needs of our students, we'll need more resources to both tackle any learning losses but also address the social and emotional needs that come with over a year of a global pandemic.

NYSUT is focused on raising revenues from the wealthiest New Yorkers so that we can fund essential services. While many New Yorkers have been struggling with the virus, the state's billionaires have gotten much richer. Since the beginning of the pandemic, NY's 141 have grown their collective wealth by \$81 billion to over \$600 billion. NYSUT is supportive of common sense bills like a small increase in state income taxes for those earning over \$5 million per year. There are zero such ultra-millionaires in Central New York.

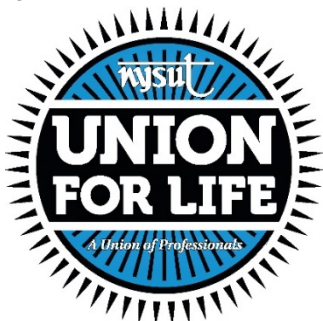
As we continue to adapt our strategies to stay safe, Committee of 100, our annual lobby day, will look a lot different this year. Instead of one day in which thousands of NYSUT members take to the state Capitol to meet with their elected officials, we will be holding hundreds of meetings with legislators, virtually over video-conference, during the first full week of March.

Our in-service members are grateful for your continued activism. By staying involved, you make this difficult year more bearable. Many of our in-service members are having the most difficult year of their careers. Having to re-learn lesson planning for remote, hybrid, and in-person socially distanced lessons has been an extreme challenge. Add to that the fears of contracting the virus and bringing it home to loved ones and you can imagine the stress of this year. In some districts, our hard working support staff, aides, bus drivers, school lunch workers and others have been furloughed or laid off.

Over the next month there are a few opportunities to get involved:

- 1) Be on the look out for invitations to Committee of 100 meetings with your legislators
- 2) Visit FundOurFutureNY.org to learn more and sign up for updates
- 3) Join us for our March Political Action Committee Meeting with Special Guest NYSUT Executive & Political Director Melinda Person on March 18th at 4:30pm.

Ian Phillips is the NYSUT Regional Political Organizer for the Central New York region. Among his many affiliations, he serves on the Auburn School Board. For more information or if you have any questions, please email him at: ian.phillips@nysut.org



At the time of this publication, there is still uncertainty as to rescheduling our meetings. It is critical that we have your email on file. Check our website and facebook page for updated info.

As a NYSUT retiree from a school in *Cayuga and Onondaga Counties*, you became a part of Retiree Council (RC) 7 of NYSUT. Through this group and your local chapter (if your local has one), you can stay informed and active as a union member and ensure your benefits are protected in retirement.

NYSUT has one of the most active and successful union retiree programs in the country. The NYSUT Retiree Services Program, part of Program Services, was established by NYSUT to help its retirees organize and to act as a service provider for those retiree groups. You can find additional information at NYSUT.org or this link: <https://www.nysut.org/members/retirees>

Is your information up-to-date with NYSUT?

If you have a new address, phone number, or email address, please contact Anne Marie Voutsinas, Retiree Services Consultant at AnneMarie.Voutsinas@nysut.org or leave a message @ 315-431-4040 ext. 40.



From the President's Desk...

Loretta K. Donlon

Re-learning. How to Stay Connected!

When we finally decide to leave a long career in school and start the monumental task of cleaning out our desk, cupboards, and lockers, we find ourselves looking through the papers many we just hate to through away. We feel as though we are cutting the daily ties to school and the district. We never thought retirement would come so fast as it did these last few years.

After the retirement parties, the feelings of freedom from correcting papers and planning classes really sets in. And it is with an inner smile as we begin planning some projects or adventures, we always wanted to do, but never had the time.

As the new September arrives bringing another school year, we celebrate Labor Day with a few other new retirees. The conversation turned to how lucky we were to enjoy retirement and the topic of school and, of course, the union. Someone had received an email from the union to join the Retiree Chapter and Retiree Council that week. As the conversations progressed, we began to remember many things about our union and realized it was still working for us, even as retirees.

One member of the group remarked how lucky we all were to have such a good pension; another noted the health insurance was a big part of her family's secure retirement. The group chuckled about the times they found stamp glued to the kitchen floor after a union postcard meeting, lobbying our elected officials to fund our schools. Those meetings were fun, but, more importantly, vital for our students and staffs. We knew that when any group was ready to attack our pension or negotiated health insurance, the union was there ready to protect our benefits.

The conclusion of our afternoon talk was that we all should remember to sign up for our Retiree Chapter and Retiree Council so we would continue to be aware of issues that were vital to our happy retirement. Our next lunch would be at a Retiree Council meeting with an afternoon of information on retirement issues and NYSUT benefits that are working for us. Member Benefits with its discounts and insurances and the political action committees were just a few mentioned.

We re-learned how we could protect our earned benefits and see our friends at the same time. Now we are re-learning how to stay connected – through webinars, zooms, emails, and other technology resources. Staying connected to our union is a necessary and rewarding part of our retirement. That's why it's so important to have our email on file, that we check NYSUT's and RC7's web pages for current information. We sometimes must stretch out of our comfort zone to stay informed. So, as we reminisce about our days in the schools, remember how important it is to stay active, involved, and informed...connected to your union!!

FLORIDA SNOWBIRD REMINDER

Are you wintering in Florida? Do you know of any former colleagues who live in Florida? Did you know there is a NYSUT Retiree Council in Florida that welcome NYSUT retirees when they are in Florida?

You can participate and receive their information while maintaining your RC 7 affiliation – you do not need to transfer to the Florida group. If you would like more information, contact RC 43's President Felicia Bruce, spmomtch1@aol.com or go to their website: <http://rc43.ny.aft.org>

What??? Union for Life???? What do I need the Union for now that I am retired?

How am I connected to my local union, regional organization (the Retiree Council or RC), NYSUT and AFT/NEA? Why do I still hear from these organizations? When you were an in-service member, the connections to your local, NYSUT, and AFT/NEA were more obvious. Our union was there to help us negotiate our working conditions, guide our working conditions, act for us, and call us to action on various issues and events. As we moved into retirement, that connection may seem less obvious.

First, most of us notice that our pension does not have union dues taken from it. For that reason, some feel you no longer belong: NOT TRUE! We do not pay dues to NYSUT or AFT, but we are still members. If your local requires retiree dues, payment of those dues is a requirement for local, NYSUT and AFT retiree membership. That gives us access to all the benefits and services of our union. Many continue to use items such as car, home, and life insurances offered by member benefits. Others may pick up new items such as Lifeline for themselves or loved ones, elder-care law packages, hearing aid packages as life events change. Some continue to be involved helping to guide the Regional Councils and chapters. It is important that we all help and are aware of our Union involvement. In retirement, what happens with our local could impact us and our benefits. What happens at the state level absolutely could impact us. And at the national level, the impact on our lives is very evident.

Please make sure you keep the relationship with your local to ensure you stay informed. Our Retiree Council needs you to be involved to ensure that our issues remain in the forefront. Also, as we are retired, we can offer our time and wisdom to assist those still in service. Please look for materials from our RC and NYSUT, read them, and make sure that your current email is available to get updates. Get involved in the work AND FUN that our retirees will again be experiencing soon!

~ Anne Marie Voutsinas, Retiree Services Consultant

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NYSUT, AFT, NEA, AFL-CIO

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Loretta Donlon, ED 51 Director

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FYI

Scholarship information will be available on the RC7 website after March 1, 2021.

Join Us on **Tuesday, March 16, 2021** for our RC 7 ZOOM Meeting and Program
Meeting begins at 1:00 PM with a brief update of RC7's activities.

"Elder Law/Legal Issues for Retirees"
will be presented immediately following with
Steven Kramer, Esq.
of Feldman, Kramer & Monaco, PC



- Learn how NYSUT retirees can best protect their homes and assets in the event that they need long-term care, either in a nursing home or at home.
- The high cost of long-term care has made elder law and estate planning such an important issue for all NYSUT retirees and their families. Proper and timely planning can help avoid financial ruin often associated with long-term care costs.
- This seminar will mainly focus on the essential estate planning documents such as a Last Will and Testament, Power of Attorney, Living Will and Health Care Proxy.
- We will be discussing strategies to minimize estate taxes, avoid probate, Medicaid eligibility requirements, the Medicaid look back period, home care options, Veterans Benefits, and strategies to protect one's home.

To attend, simply send an email to Lilli Rastegar at misslilli13@hotmail.com with RC 7 meeting in the subject line. You will receive a confirmation email with the zoom link. This seminar is open to all members of RC7 and the members of their household. Link will only be shared to email addresses of registered NYSUT members.

Did You Send in Your Participation Fee?

Active membership in Retiree Council 7 is open to every NYSUT retiree of any NYSUT represented group in Election District 7. ED 7 is comprised of all units in 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 local retiree fees. **Associate membership** is open to the spouses of active members.

One important note: If you are retired from Auburn, ESM, Jordan-Elbridge, Liverpool, North Syracuse, or Port Byron, your RC 7 participation fee is collected with the dues for your local retiree chapter and then forwarded to us. You should not use the form here or mail dues directly to us.

We Remember ...

Baldwinsville

Diane Allen
 David Butler
 Mary Kay Hueber
 Betty Morrow

Solvay

Thomas Balas
 Edith Callisto
 Anthony Noce

Jamesville-Dewitt

Angeline Banac
 Marilyn Dixon
 Annie Keim
 Jack McCabe
 Elizabeth Pistilli

OCC

Martha Jaynes

Westhill

Annette Fini
 Anthony Mallore

Lyncourt

Muriel Diefendorf

Marcellus

Martha Lollis

West Genesee

Richard Bowles, Sr.
 Nancy Greene
 Marlene Milea
 Patricia Welch
 Marian Williams +Marc

Port Byron

Dan Gardner

Cato Meridan

Shirley Chapman
 Betty VanNorstrand

Onondaga

Marie Volles

Fayetteville-Manlius

Charlotte Bergstrom
 Mary Biondolillo + JD
 William Farrell
 Barbara Lock
 Betty Mitscher

Fabius Pompey

David Klem + ESM

Liverpool

Barbara Dougher
 Karen English
 Mary Green +OCM
 Brian Hitchcock
 Dolores Johnson
 Richard Kimiak
 Janet King
 Peter Paige +NS, Solvay

East Syracuse-Minoa

Starr Canestrano
 Marlene Douglas
 John Johnson
 Anna Stevenson
 Frances Volinsky

CCC

Kaye Brown

Jordan Elbridge

James Reagen
 Marjorie Rudd

North Syracuse

Mary Pat Essel
 John Fogarty
 Margaret Freund
 Lynn Giddings
 Deborah Midgley
 Betsey Savage
 Marguerite Shaffer
 Barbara Wachob

Skaneateles

Jacqueline Amrhein
 Jane Ginley
 Carmen Kosoff
 Barbara (Betty) Mahoney

Union Springs

Mary Louise Kauh

Syracuse

Conne Baker
 Marion (DeeDee) Brown
 Anita Capozzi
 Caryl Cooper

Rita D'Amico
 Mary DeLorenzo
 Anne DeSantis
 Patricia DiFlorio
 Mary Lou Dopyera
 Tirona Edwards
 Lorraine Funderberg
 Ralph Garcea, Sr.
 Simone Grant
 Mary (Colleen) Kolakowski
 Margaret Larson
 Heather McAster
 Jane McIntyre
 Norma Miguel
 Mildred Mounce
 Arthur Muhl
 Francis Ostrom, Jr.
 Annie Perry
 Anna Marie Scarson
 Carol Schoenborn
 Kadip Sen
 Richard Troch
 Carole Wasko
 Corine Williams

Please mail membership form with your \$10.00 check payable to

NYSUT RC 7 to:

RC 7 Membership Chair
 4983 Brittonfield Pkwy

NYSUT Regional Office
 E. Syracuse, NY 13057

Retiree Council 7 Membership Form 2020 - 2021

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

District retired from _____

Position _____

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- 
TRAVEL
&
TOURS
- 
CAR &
TRUCK
RENTALS

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HOUSE
CLOSINGS
- 
LEGAL LETTERS
WRITTEN

To learn more about Member Benefits-endorsed programs & services, visit memberbenefits.nysut.org or call **800-626-8101**.



For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits.

Jan./Feb.'21