



Retired Public Employees Association, Inc.

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Stanley Winter, President Michael B. Fitzgerald, Executive Director

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The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

I am writing on behalf of the 40,000 members of the Retired Public Employees Association both to congratulate you on your election as Governor of our great state and to pledge that we are ready to join you in accomplishing the important reform agenda needed for our citizens to regain faith in government.

The Retired Public Employees Association (RPEA) is a totally member supported not-for-profit organization that has represented the interests of public service retirees from both New York State and local governments for over 40 years. Our mission is two-fold. We keep our members abreast of issues related to their retirement, by way of research and analysis, and we work on their behalf to protect the security they earned during their years of public service. We are headquartered in Albany with 13 chapters across the State. We are not affiliated with the public employee unions negotiating on behalf of the current government workforce.

As taxpayers and former public service careerists, we are well aware of the serious fiscal crises at all levels of government in the State. Particularly worrisome to our members that rely on modest fixed retirement income is the unprecedented rise in health care costs. Along with that is the very real threat of losing the health insurance support they earned while in public service. Clearly, we all share the need to address the fiscal and societal issues involved.

The recent report "Health Insurance Cost Sharing: New York States Model for Localities." prepared by the Rockefeller Institute is a good starting point for identifying the issues facing public service retirees and their former employers. The report, prepared under the auspices of then Lt. Gov. Richard Ravitch, offers a number of interesting proposals to address these issues. The key item in the report for RPEA and those we represent is the recognition that government retirees are entitled to employer sponsored health insurance.

RPEA believes that certain core principles must be adopted as a basis for analysis and eventually the design of reasonable solutions. Our organization proposes:

1. As recognized in the Ravitch report, all retirees with appropriate service are entitled to health insurance coverage provided under the auspices of their previous employer.
2. No current retiree presently having health insurance coverage should lose it or have it altered in a fundamental way. Such alteration could result from negotiations for active employees who might accept higher health insurance costs in return for salary increases. As a result retirees,

who are linked to employee health insurance, would end up paying higher health costs without the benefit of increases in income.

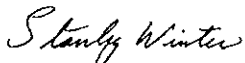
3. There should be increased transparency in dealing with the issue of retiree health insurance. No changes to retiree health insurance should be made without prior notification to retirees. This would include an adequate period of review for any proposed changes and an opportunity for retirees to meet and confer with government officials.

4. As an active member of the 2009 "Task Force on Public Retiree Health Care", we believe that framework was productive in initiating a dialogue that needs to be continued. The issues concerning all stakeholders must be identified and addressed as a basis for developing meaningful solutions.

RPEA's membership on the Task Force ensured representation of retirees' interests and a valuable resource in advising on health insurance and pension issues. We count among our membership retirees from a very broad background including service in key management positions. In addition, our membership is highly diverse both in terms of geography and interests. RPEA is proud of our history of service and believes we can be a useful partner in dealing with issues facing public service retirees and the people of our great state.

The RPEA looks forward to working with your administration in shaping a fair, appropriate, and sustainable system of health insurance for those who have devoted their careers to serving the people of New York.

Very truly yours,


Stanley Winter
President