



Retired Public Employees Association, Inc.

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MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

March 29, 2011

S.3218, Senator GOLDEN
A.4957, M. of A. GALEF, et al.

AN ACT to amend the public officers law, in relation to certain collective bargaining agreements

On behalf of the almost 40,000 Retired Public Employees Association members and their dependents, we support this bill which would provide, under certain circumstances, that the proposed terms of a public employee or school district collective bargaining agreement, together with facts describing the economic impact and any new costs attributable to such agreement, shall be made available to the public. Such information would also be required, in such circumstances, to be posted on the municipal or school district websites, if such websites exist, and within the local public libraries and offices of such school district.

Health insurance benefits of public employee retirees and their dependents are often affected by collective bargaining agreements between local governments or school districts and active employee representatives. However, these retirees cannot, by law, be represented in the collective bargaining process under the Taylor Law and they do not know in advance the proposed terms of contracts that affect one their most basic needs as retired persons—health insurance coverage.

Public servants who retire after devoting a lifetime of service to their community have earned the health insurance benefits which are provided to them. They have the right to know how such benefits are proposed to be changed. In some instances, proposed contracts may affect arrangements with retirees' Medicare coverage and interfere with a system that saves local governments a substantial amount of money when Medicare is the retirees' primary health care provider.

Furthermore, retirees should be afforded the opportunity to be heard and provide their suggestions before the local government or school district adopts the terms of a contract that changes what they will pay toward their health insurance benefits. Only with full disclosure of the proposed terms of collective bargaining agreements will retirees have the tools to do so.

For these reasons, RPEA respectfully urges passage of this bill.