By the time you read this, the border wall and immigration security impasse will be resolved. Will the ill will and raw emotions engendered by that impasse prove a hindrance to compromise legislation with the “deal-making” president? Will his personality further obstruct legislative progress? For the nation’s sake, we hope not.

**Prescription Drug Pricing**

This is another area where Trump and Democrats have said they agree: lowering skyrocketing drug prices. Especially for seniors, it’s a very politically popular thing to do. How? It could come in the form of changes to Medicare or certain drug rebate laws. But the big Pharma lobby is powerful, and it has so far convinced Trump to take a softer approach. Chances? Positive for minor reforms.

**Stabilizing the Affordable Care Act**

Democrats are looking at passing a bill to stabilize the law. They want to fight back against the lawsuits to have the ACA declared unconstitutional. Remember, the ACA was Nancy Pelosi’s signature piece of legislation passed in 2010, so keeping the health care law alive is very important to her. Given his expressed antipathy for an Obama and Pelosi signature success, expect Trump to oppose very hard on this front. Trump has shown little interest in the details of health care. Chances are very slightly positive.

**Gun Law Reform**

Pelosi has committed to bringing gun legislation to the floor including a universal background check law. The plan is to have the universal background check bill be bipartisan. Will Senate Republican Majority Leader Mitch McConnell even allow it to come to the Senate floor for a vote. The pundits say no. So, chances are negative for such legislation with a Republican Senate.

**Environmental Issues**

Obviously, any legislation that the Democrat House might produce would die for lack of advancement in the Senate, which would only uphold the president’s policies and deregulations. However, Democrats on the House Energy and Commerce Committee will likely conduct oversight of the Trump administration’s rollback of environmental regulations, providing public exposure of some of the more extreme threats to health and well-being. Some Democrats want to establish a select committee to push climate change legislation. Again, the Senate will likely ignore. Chances, a big zero.

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Retirees: Did you know that there are over 50 vendors offering discounts to UFT members. You can find them on the UFT mobile app under Member Discounts or call UFT Member Services at (212) 596-9512 for a list of participating vendors.
It is envisioned that unscripted outreach experiments be considered which will be grounded in the well-developed policies and practices of the RTC, honoring past leadership upon whose shoulders we stand.

The Janus Supreme Court decision combined with other anti-labor assaults on working men and women have taught us the importance of active inclusion of rank-and-file union members in the life of their union. The groundwork done by the UFT in coordination with its NYSUT and AFT affiliates has demonstrated that strong rank-and-file participation in union activities is the best defense against such attacks. That we were proactive in advance of these onslaughts prepared us to win and not lose the battles confronting us. That is why engaging the fresh energies of these newer retirees is so important.

Each Leadership Council member will be encouraged to develop a project of personal interest which they and the coordinators believe will enhance the interests of rank and file retiree members, preparing the Chapter for its future stages of development.

We have had two meetings so far and UFT President Michael Mulgrew, Staff Director LeRoy Barr, officers such as Treasurer Debbie Penny, Vice President Anne Goldman, the TRS Trustees and Ann Rosen have already spent time with the participants to encourage them. We expect that projects related to member engagement, tapping into the interests of rank and file retirees, union organizing, various forms of volunteering, COPE, political action, member benefits, social and cultural matters and more will be high on their agenda.

Let’s wish them well in their endeavors.

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**Celebrating Michael Rothfeld**

Retired teacher Michael Rothfeld has for years worked diligently up front and behind the scenes furthering the cause of veterans and the Veteran’s Council of St. John’s County in Florida. He produced five documentaries highlighting the service of veterans which gained state and national acclaim and have appeared on the Jacksonville PBS station, WJCT TV. Michael edits and produces a monthly newsletter, finds guest speakers, raises funds and captures the accomplishments of the council and its members with photos.

Mr. Rothfeld was recognized by the Veterans Council of St. Johns County with the Colonel George E. Taylor Award which is given to those for their service to our county’s veterans. He is also one of six honorary members of the Vietnam Veterans of America for contributing, honoring and preserving the stories of Vietnam veterans.

It is well to note: Michael is not a veteran and has not spent one day in the military. Few men in this county have accomplished as much as he has as veteran or civilian.