

RETIREE



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THE UNITED FEDERATION OF TEACHERS RETIRED TEACHERS CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

Congress watch



During summer's heat, no one could be found in the halls of Congress! So, let's review legislative action from June and early July.

Some say in spite of the Republican presidential candidate – others more cynically say because of him – House Speaker Paul Ryan introduced his policy agenda called “A Better Way” in late June. It speaks to numerous public issues including national security, healthcare, poverty, finance regulation, tax reform and constitutional authority.

Ryan's proposal says, “Obamacare has limited choices for patients, driven up costs for consumers, and buried employers and health care providers under thousands of new regulations. This law cannot be fixed.” Essentially, Ryan wants to eliminate and replace the Affordable Care Act, not a new suggestion from him.

The Ryan plan, says Eric Beech writing for Reuters on June 22, “recycles long-held Republican proposals like allowing consumers to buy health insurance across state lines, expanding the use of health savings accounts and giving states block grants to run the Medicaid program for the poor.”

Ryan proposes to gradually increase the Medicare eligibility age, which is

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Message from Tom

BY TOM MURPHY, UFT/RTC CHAPTER LEADER

FDR's crusty Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, once told this folksy Tennessee Hills story about leaders and followers:

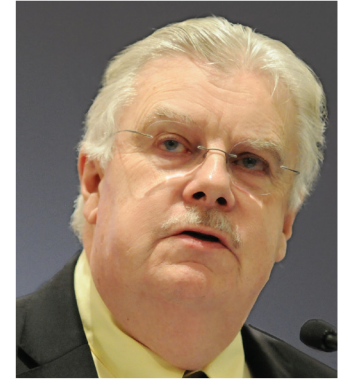
The school board was throwing questions at a student. “Tommy,” asked one adult, “If there are 16 sheep in a field and one jumps over the fence, how many are left?”

“None,” Tommy replied. “Well,” said the school board member, “I’m afraid you don’t know anything about arithmetic.” “The trouble is,” Tommy replied, “you don’t know anything about sheep.” (From “The Borrowed Years” by Robert Ketchum, page 178.)

The UFT has endorsed a presidential candidate but we don’t expect retirees to act like sheep who unthinkingly jump over a fence. When we do vote in line with the UFT’s voting recommendations, we should do so with thoughtful consideration.

Below, I’ve created a list of issues that I believe are important to retirees, educators and unionists. **Score each issue from 1 to 10 in terms of your support with 1 signifying low support and 10 high.** Put your score in the brackets. Then total your scores in the space provided on page 2. Compare what you value with the candidates’ positions. *(See key at end of survey).*

Increased funding of public education	[] A
Private school vouchers	[] B
Public funds/tax credits for for-profit charter schools	[] B
Government support for affordable tuition at public colleges	[] A
Immigration reform with a road to citizenship	[] A
Exclude Muslims from entry to United States	[] B
Deport undocumented immigrants	[] B
Candidate's governmental experience	[] C
Government regulation of hedge funds, and investment and banking firms	[] A
Strengthen regulatory laws akin to FDR's Glass-Steagall Act of 1933	[] A
Candidates' trustworthiness	[] C
Privatization of Social Security	[] B
Create Medicare vouchers that could limit the program	[] B
Improve and enhance Social Security	[] A
Social Security COLA based on senior needs (CPIE)	[] A
Cut or privatize Social Security	[] B



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Candidate's integrity	[] C
Improve the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare)	[] A
Eliminate the Affordable Care Act	[] B
Allow Medicare to negotiate drug prices as does Veterans Affairs	[] A
Fight pharmaceuticals to control skyrocketing drug prices	[] A
Public investment in infrastructure	[] A
Strict controls on nuclear weapons	[] C
NATO alliance resistance to an expansionist Russia	[] C
Trade agreements must be labor friendly	[] A
Support for Israel	[] A
De-escalate U.S. involvement in Mideast conflicts	[] C
Protect Planned Parenthood and the right to choose	[] A
Marriage equality and fairness on sexual orientation	[] A
Overturn voter discrimination laws and promote voter access	[] A
Progressive Supreme Court appointees who are labor friendly	[] A

KEY A - progressive labor issues ____ (score)
 B - conservative issues ____ (score)
 C - overlapping issues ____ (score)

If you based your election choice on these issues, for whom would you vote? The AFT and the AFL-CIO have endorsed Hillary Clinton for president. How does she score on the majority of issues that are important to you?

CONGRESS *continued from page 1*

currently 65, to match that of the Social Security pension plan, which is 67 for people born in 1960 or later.

Ryan contends that Social Security and Medicare are going bankrupt, contrary to reports from Social Security and Medicare, which both say their funds are strong and solvent. Social Security has the funds to pay full benefits until 2034, while Medicare can cover its obligations until 2028.

As it has been noted here on more than one occasion, raising the income cap on Social Security taxes would fund Social Security far into the century.

Alex Lawson of Social Security Works wrote: "Raising the Medicare age to 67 means that millions of Americans, many of them Social Security beneficiaries, would be forced to purchase expensive private insurance instead. That's a cut to our earned benefits."

Americans are living longer, but most U.S. citizens are forced to work longer to stay afloat financially. For those people who do physical labor their entire lives, forcing them to continue that activity another year or two is cruel. The vast majority of working-class Americans don't sit at desks, unlike our elected representatives in Congress, to earn money.

If we want to hold down government spending on Medicare, let's start by holding drug companies accountable for price gouging. And let's permit Medicare to negotiate drug prices the way the Department of Veteran Affairs does.

OBAMACARE IN CROSSHAIRS

Efforts to end the Affordable Care Act continue unabated. During early July, The New York Times reported that the House Ways and Means and the Energy and Commerce Committees



June Medicare Reimbursements

Medicare-eligible retirees received their 2015 Medicare Part B reimbursement by Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) directly into their bank accounts on June 17. Medicare-eligible retirees who submitted the necessary documents for reimbursement of the Medicare Part B 2014 IRMAA (Income Related Monthly Adjustment Amount) also received their direct deposit reimbursement on June 17. Those who do not receive pension checks by direct deposit received their reimbursement checks by regular mail.

REMINDER: After receiving the Medicare Part B 2015 reimbursements, if you are eligible, you should file for the IRMAA 2015 reimbursement. You are eligible for an IRMAA 2015 refund if, as an individual, you earned \$85,000 or more; and, as a couple, you earned \$170,000 or more.

Forms for the IRMAA 2015 reimbursement are available for those who are eligible on the UFT website at www.uft.org under quick links on the Retired Teachers page. You must fill out the form and send it along with the required documentation.

If you cannot download a form, call a UFT health consultant at (212) 598-7726.

"concluded that the administration plowed ahead with funding for a consumer cost-reduction program that was central to the new health insurance law even though Congress did not provide money for it."

As reported by Carl Hulse on July 7, "In May, a federal District Court judge, ruling in a case brought by House Republicans, found that the

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UFT RETIREES AT THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION



Top Left: UFT retirees attend the Alliance for Retired Americans conference at the Democratic National Convention in July.

Top Right: UFT President Michael Mulgrew addresses the ARA during the DNC Convention in Philadelphia.

Bottom Left: Frances Longworth and Janet Glickman - The hats say it all!

Center: Support pins made by Frances Longworth and Janet Glickman.



UFT volunteer Eric Metzger knocking on union member doors for Hillary during the Pennsylvania primary.



UFT retiree volunteers during California primary.



UFT Nevada Retiree Coordinator Richie Miller and his wife Janet with candidate Hillary Clinton.

REGISTER TO KEEP YOUR TEACHING CERTIFICATE ACTIVE

New state requirements regarding certification took effect on July 1. If you plan to work for more than 90 days in the upcoming school year, register online during the month in which you were born through your online TEACH account. For example, if you were born Oct. 15, register any time during October. This registration informs the state that you are keeping your teaching certificate active. There is no fee to register.

If you do not plan to work more than 90 days in the upcoming school year, you don't have to register. Your state certification will not be affected. If, at a later time you wish to participate, you may register without penalty.

If you are not sure you will be teaching, don't panic! You can register at a later date without consequences. It will not affect your teaching certificate.

Please note: If you were certified through NYC Board of Examiners only, this regulation does not affect you.

Questions? Contact an educational liaison in your UFT Borough Office. Be sure to indicate that you are retired. To find out the name of your liaison, visit www.uft.org/teaching/uft-educational-liaisons. We will also send an email reminder during your birthday month.

administration funneled the money to insurance companies without constitutional authority, and the judge blocked further spending. But the court order was stayed pending an appeal...”

From our perspective, the Affordable Care Act guarantees payment of care for catastrophic illnesses despite the costs, which is so **important** for many of our older retirees who receive small pensions.

Attempts to end the Affordable Care Act will continue, especially if the Republican nominee becomes president and the Senate and House remain in the Republicans’ hands. The GOP’s platform is clear about this: “Any honest agenda for improving healthcare must start with repeal of the dishonestly named Affordable Care Act of 2010: Obamacare.” (You can read more at www.gop.com/platform/renewing-American-values.)

Finally, from New York Times columnist Gail Collins: Gov. Mike Pence “is a social conservative who hews to the Paul Ryan vision of government — low taxes on the rich, free trade and a trimming of the Social Security safety net. Big relief to the powers that be. But what about all those underemployed, alienated white workers who are expecting an anti-establishment, populist savior?”

The political situation within the Republican Party was mired in confusion this summer for sure. But as long as Ryan remains the speaker, the Republican legislative agenda will remain intact.

BURIAL PLOTS FOR UFT MEMBERS AT DISCOUNTED PRICES

UFT members may purchase cemetery plots in Rose Hills Memorial Park, a non-denominational cemetery in Putnam County, at a deep discount.

UFT Memorials, Inc. offers plots for \$750 including perpetual care. Each plot accommodates two people, and adjacent plots are available if purchased at the same time.

Also available for an additional cost: grave markers of bronze plaques set on granite bases. The plaques are available in one size.

For further information and an application, please send us the coupon below:

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