

RETIREE



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THE UNITED FEDERATION OF TEACHERS RETIRED TEACHERS CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

Congress watch



The demise of Republican attempts to “repeal and replace” the Affordable Care Act was a lesson in what the *New York Times* reported as a basic principle of USA politics: You can’t take away from citizens what you have provided. Citizens made their needs known and even Republican senators could not withstand the political pressure.

That’s also why Republican efforts to kill Social Security and Medicare after their respective passages also failed. In the current instance, the “repeal and replace” legislation contained provisions for the demise of Medicaid. This contradicted the President’s promises during his campaign not to touch Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. He abandoned that promise in the legislative campaign for “repeal and replace.” Ironically, his comments contradicted his own campaign as well as prior comments he made during the legislative process.

The greatest irony was the final attempt by Senate Republicans, trying to use a legislative maneuver, to pass a bill that they acknowledged they did not want to be signed into law! They had

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Message from Tom

BY TOM MURPHY, UFT/RTC CHAPTER LEADER

In a letter to UFT retirees included with UFT calendar books, President Michael Mulgrew wrote the following:

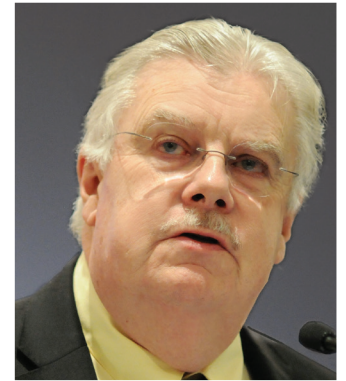
Your union continues to fight for members’ dignity both on the job and in retirement and to protect and improve a pension and benefit package that is one of the best in the country. We are proud of these accomplishments. But because we live in perilous times, we can take nothing for granted.

There is a proposal for a constitutional convention in New York State that could make drastic changes to your hard-fought pensions, your right to join a union and to collectively bargain as well as to every New York child’s right to a free public education. Environmental safeguards could also be overturned, allowing real estate developers to undo the strong protections New York State’s constitution provides for “forever wild” areas such as the Adirondacks and the Catskills.

This proposal will be on the ballot in the November 2017 election. Whether you live in New York State or not, you can help defeat it: It will certainly affect you no matter where you live.

That’s why we’re asking you — whether you live in New York or not — to make a list of 10 eligible voters who reside in the state and to call

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As from our classroom days, here is a Murphy political action homework assignment: Today, create a list of 10 New York voters to whom you can appeal to just before the Nov. 7 election urging them to vote “No” to a constitutional convention.

Remind them that the referendum question is on the BACK of the ballot. Put the list where you’ll be sure to see it in a timely manner before the election.

For more information, go to NYSUT’s website at www.nysut.org or the UFT website at www.uft.org/NYSUT_vote_no.

WRITING LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



It is so important that our retiree members are informed about the upcoming vote on a state constitutional convention. In the July 2017 issue of the *New York Teacher*, Gerri Herskowitz, the director of Retiree Programs, wrote about the importance of writing letters against the constitutional convention.

The following link to the article also gives you the guidelines and a template with important points you can make when writing a letter to the editor: www.uft.org/write-letters

hoped that the House and Senate conference committee would agree on a better “repeal and replace” bill. But the drama and the subterfuges by Republicans continue. On the same day that the Senate attempts to “repeal and replace” collapsed, the Speaker and House Republicans introduced a budget resolution that contained major hits to Social Security and Medicare.

As reported in the *New York Times* on July 18:

“For months, Republican leaders in Congress have said that it was crucial to cut the taxes imposed by President Barack Obama’s health care law so that they could introduce even deeper income tax cuts later on ... Now those Affordable Care Act taxes will remain, and the ability of the party to coalesce around ambitious tax legislation is in doubt ... the House Budget Committee’s 2018 budget resolution blueprint ... calls for a \$621.5 billion national defense budget for 2018 and \$511 billion for nondefense spending. **The most contentious part is at least \$203 billion in cuts over a decade in “mandatory” spending on programs such as Medicare and Social Security.** [emphasis added] And it recommends repealing parts of the 2010 Dodd-Frank Act that ushered in financial regulations after the last recession.”

To read the full article, visit www.uft.org/republican-budget-battle.

As of this writing, there is no indication that bipartisan efforts will

be encouraged in the writing of any tax legislation. Once again, public hearings and comments might not be sought except for the protests from those negatively affected. Keep writing letters if you want to protect your Social Security and Medicare!

Finally, Michael Phelan, deputy director of Social Security Works, sent an email on Aug. 2 about a piece of legislation supported by pharmaceutical companies. Here’s an excerpt:

“....their Washington lobbyists are pushing a new bill — the Orphan Product Extensions Now (OPEN) Act — which would grant drug manufacturers six additional months of exclusivity, the monopoly power that allows the companies to charge as much as they like.

It’s estimated that this new law would cost patients and taxpayers up to \$11.6 billion over 10 years...

If passed, the bill would allow drug companies to repurpose drugs that are already on the market, giving them “orphan” status. **For patients this means competing drugs that might lower prices would be kept off the market, leading to budget busting drug prices for even longer for the people.**”

As we have previously suggested, keep your eyes on the legislative processes and write or call your Congressional representatives when your interests are at stake.



PARTNERS THROUGH EXPERIENCE

The UFT Partners Through Experience is an informal, non-judgmental support program that matches a new teacher (one to three years of experience) with a recent retiree (from one to five years) to form a collaborative relationship.

It’s a great way for new teachers to receive support and guidance when starting their careers and for retirees to stay active in the life of the union and share their experiences with new teachers.

If you are interested in participating in this program, please register online at www.uft.org/partners-through-experience.

RETIREES TRAIN IN 'VIRTUAL' PHONE BANKING



Virtual phone technology is the latest computerized technology for phone banking.



Volunteers learn how to use "virtual phone" technology, which uses Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) for voice communications.



Viewing a New Jersey map for the governor's race. The AFT has endorsed Philip Murphy, the U.S. Ambassador to Germany during the Obama administration.

Photos: CARA METZ

UFT PARTNERS WITH MEMORIAL SLOAN KETTERING TO PROVIDE BETTER MEMBER SERVICE

Under the leadership of UFT President Michael Mulgrew, the UFT has partnered with Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center to provide members with individualized, personal service when faced with a cancer diagnosis.

The program, MSK Direct, gives members access to a dedicated and compassionate team of cancer specialists at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, which is ranked No.1 in the northeast. When faced with a cancer diagnosis, reliable information and timely comprehensive care are crucial. Through MSK Direct, the experts at Memorial Sloan Kettering will help you make the right plan.

The MSK Direct team includes experienced nurses, social workers and care advisors who will guide you through the process of seeking care at Memorial Sloan Kettering. They can facilitate prompt access to a doctor, including a guaranteed appointment with an appropriate specialist at Memorial Sloan

Kettering within two business days of speaking with a representative. They will help you gather all necessary medical records and meet you at your first appointment to introduce you to the clinical team that will handle your treatment.

You have access to MSK Direct at no additional cost beyond standard co-pays and deductibles. Your spouse, domestic partner, children, parents and parents-in-law can also all receive assistance through MSK Direct (subject to health insurance coverage for care at Memorial Sloan Kettering) as well.

Want to participate in MSK Direct? All you need to do to get started is call our dedicated MSK Direct telephone line at 844-350-5034. For more information, download a flyer at www.uft.org/msk-direct.



Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center™

RETIREES IN ACTION



With UFT support, Florida ARA members had a birthday celebration for Social Security at Congressman Vern Buchanan's office.



New York State ARA President Barry Kaufmann – far left; board member Michael Tutrone (TWU Local 100) – second from right; and UFT retiree and activist Carl Pato – far right – met with Congressman Dan Donovan (R/Staten Island), second from left.

NYS GENERAL ELECTION SCHEDULE

DEADLINE INFORMATION:

- **OCT. 31** – Last day to postmark an application or letter of application by mail for an absentee ballot.
- **Nov. 6** – Last day to apply IN-PERSON for absentee ballot.
- **Nov. 6** – Last day to postmark ballot. (Must be received by the local board of elections no later than Nov. 15. Military ballots must be received no later than Nov. 21.)
- **Nov. 7** – Last day to deliver ballot IN-PERSON to the local board of elections (by someone other than the voter).

If you have questions or need additional information, please go the New York State Board of Elections webpage at www.elections.ny.gov.



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them during the last week of October and ask them to vote against the constitutional convention. They do not need to be members of a union themselves, because this proposal is a threat to all New Yorkers.

We need your support for this and other political battles on the horizon, which is why I encourage you to stay informed by signing up on the UFT website, www.uft.org to receive email updates on political issues. I also urge you to contribute to COPE, the union's political action fund, if you're not already doing so, and to stay connected by participating in the Retired Teacher's Chapter, or as I like to call it, "Our Daytime Union."

Michael Mulgrew

Michael Mulgrew
UFT Presidentx