



Notes From The Chapter Chair

March 2021

Hello to all our RPEA members in the Genesee Valley Chapter! It has been so long since we last gathered together (Holiday Party December 2019). Hopefully we will be able to get together later this year! I hope all of you and your families are well. If you have lost anyone near to you throughout this past year, our hearts go out to you and our prayers are with you. It has been a difficult year for us all. I hope you have had your COVID vaccine or are scheduled for it soon. That has certainly been a trying and complicated process for us all.

I hope you have kept up-to-date with RPEA through e-mail blasts and the web page. And don't forget – our chapter has its own fb page. Look for us at Genesee Valley RPEA.

Jan Beutner-Shirtz, Chapter Chair

RPEA LEGISLATIVE ACTION:

Each year the Genesee Valley Chapter sends a congratulatory letter to our newly elected and re-elected state representatives. This year our chapter's geographic area includes 5 new Assemblymembers and 3 new Senators who, in all probability, have not heard of RPEA. So it is imperative that we engage with ALL 14 of our elected reps to keep our concerns before them. I have an updated listing of all our reps that I would be happy to email to you. Contact me at: janbeutner@gmail.com. Below is an excerpt from the letter that was sent out:

“State and some local government retirees maintain health insurance in retirement through the New York State Health Insurance Program (NYSHIP). The proposed 2020-2021 Executive Budget would diminish or eliminate some NYSHIP benefits that our members earned through their many years of dedicated service to the people of this state. Specifically, retirees are reimbursed for their Medicare premiums, which increase every year. The budget would cap this premium at the current rate. Retirees are also reimbursed for the Medicare Income Related Monthly Adjustment Amount (IRMAA). The budget would eliminate this reimbursement. Finally, all retirees pay for NYSHIP health insurance without regard to years of service. The budget would establish a sliding scale of premiums for future retirees based on years of service. Our members live on a fixed income and cannot afford the increased costs that these measures would place on them. RPEA strongly opposes these measures and asks your support in also opposing them.”

You can find RPEA's Legislative Agenda for 2021 on the RPEA website: www.rpea.org.

PENSION NEWS:

According to the Office of the State Comptroller, retirees pay nearly \$2 billion in real property taxes, and \$700 million in state and local sales taxes statewide. Retirees are also a driving force in the state's economy, generating \$12.6 billion in economic activity. 79% of NYS retirees continue to live in the state. The pension fund had an estimated value of \$226.4 billion as of September 30, 2020.

During the last legislative session, a bill was introduced to mandate the comptroller divest fossil fuel energy company investments in the pension fund. RPEA was successful in helping defeat this proposal. A compromise was reached with the comptroller, who has agreed to transition to green energy sources by 2024.

MEMBERSHIP:

It is so important that we continue to build our membership. Please reach out to your family, friends, and co-workers who have retired from public service and share RPEA with them. They can check out all RPEA has to offer and how to sign up at www.rpea.org.

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