

# Spotlight 21

## SERVING RETIREES FROM

Bay Shore      Brentwood      East Islip      West Islip  
Bayport-Blue Point      Central Islip      Hauppauge      Sayville  
Connetquot      Islip



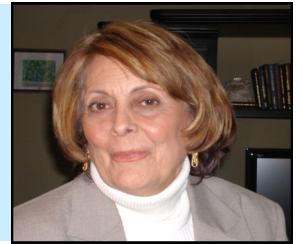
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April - May, 2013

## A Message From President

### Joan Perrini



### The Governor's Budget: What Will It Cost Education?

Looking at the field of education today, we can certainly say things have changed from when we were actively teaching, and sadly not for the better. Currently, school districts are suffering under the weight of the 2% tax cap and a significant decrease in state aid. The present governor's budget recommended \$21 billion in school aid for the 2013/14 school year – representing an increase of \$889 million – this is still a half billion dollars less than was budgeted in 2009/10.

Yet it doesn't stop there. Last year schools were forced to cut more than 5,000 educator jobs. Over the last 4 years, 35,000 educator positions were lost in New York State. This not only affects educational quality, but puts more people on the unemployment lines.

And if excessing teachers wasn't enough, some school districts on Long Island have increased class sizes to 40 students, and cut programs in art, music, AP courses, and additional electives for students heading for college. If this continues, we will go from being one of the top states in educational excellence to one of the lowest.

Added to the burden of money shortage, cuts in programs, and large class sizes, we have spent millions on testing programs for children. This system of over-testing deprives students of valuable instruction time in the classroom. Tests are important and have their place, but teachers need time to encourage creativity and initiative to better prepare students for their futures. While we should continue to try to achieve educational improvement under some difficult economic

stress, let us not forget to maintain the balance that good teaching provides.

Another attempt at "improvement" by our Governor is the \$125 million he has set aside in the budget for competitive grants. This is not an answer to the problem either, and we need to tell the Governor that education is not a computer game - **competitive grants just serve to make school districts more unequal.** Additional funding must be provided to restore the school aid that has been cut since 2009. Two years of sizeable state aid cuts, coupled with the imposition of the tax cap, have created conditions from which many districts will not be able to recover.

It's clear that something has to change and this means we need your help. Your leaders in RC 21 have been lobbying with New York legislators to restore educational quality in our state. We want them to know that even though retirees are no longer active in the classroom, they continue to be concerned about the profession they have cherished over the years. These issues affect their grandchildren and the type of educational support that they will receive.

Maintaining the tax cap as it is will continue to force districts to eliminate programs. We must petition the Governor and our state legislators to eliminate the tax cap or at least adjust the cap to exclude costs that are beyond the districts' control.

The following items cover what **NYSUT urges the legislature to do:**

Allow reasonable adjustments to the tax cap for costs that are extraordinary or beyond the control of school dis-

tricts (e.g. costs associated with emergency expenses like Hurricane Sandy relief, one-time costs to improve school safety, fuel costs.

- **S-3456 (Maziarz/A-4843 (Gunther))** – Exempts certain expenditures relating to school safety from tax levy limits
- **(Legislation Pending Introduction)** – Exempts certain expenditures relating to natural disasters from tax levy limits.
- **A-1176(Jaffee)** – Exempts expenditures resulting from court orders or judgments against a school district or local government from tax levy limits.
- **S-2800 (Ball/A-3137 (Galef))** – Exempts BOCES capital expenditures from limitations upon local school district tax levies.
- **(Legislation Pending Reintroduction)** Exempts certain tuition payments by school districts for general education and special students residing in such school districts from tax levy limits.
- **A-1907 (Hooper)** – Provides that a transfer of functions between or among local governments and school districts shall be taken into account in the tax levy limits.

Replace the onerous and inequitable 60 percent supermajority requirement, needed to exceed the tax cap, with a simple majority vote.

- **(Legislation Pending Introduction)** – Amends tax cap statute to require a simple majority for override of tax levy limits. *(Continued on page 2)*

*(BUDGET from page 1)*

Finally, we have additional concerns as seniors regarding our own benefits. Following are the items we have to pay attention to. The recommendations of NYSUT are:

**Stable Rate Pension Contribution Option (Pension Smoothing):**

The Executive Budget proposal seeks to address increased pension contribution rates for school districts and local government employers by creating a Stable Rate Pension Contribution option for local governments. The governor acknowledges that the Tier 6 reforms will take several years to translate into actual savings for public employers. This new proposal attempts to frontload future savings of Tier 6 into current years, with repayment expected later. Implementation of the Stable Rate Pension Contribution Option is at the full discretion of the State Comptroller and the New York State Teachers' Retirement System Board.

NYSUT has long supported implementing some type of smoothing to help reduce the recent temporary spike in employer pension costs. We have supported similar legislation to

allow for a smoothing option for school districts for several years.

**NYSUT Urges the Legislature to:**

- Provide some form of smoothing option to school districts that will provide them with a tool to help put an end to the education program cuts we have seen in recent years.
- Any option provided to school districts should also take into account the need to maintain the integrity of the state's retirement systems. The retirement security of both current and future public retirees must be protected. We have the strongest public pensions in the nation and we need to keep it that way.

**Income Related Medicare Adjustment Amount (IRMAA) - Medicare**

**Part B:** NYSUT opposes the Executive's Budget proposal to cease reimbursement of the Income Related Medicare Adjustment Amount for Medicare Part B premiums paid by certain retirees. A budgetary change that denies full reimbursement of additional out-of-pocket health care pre-

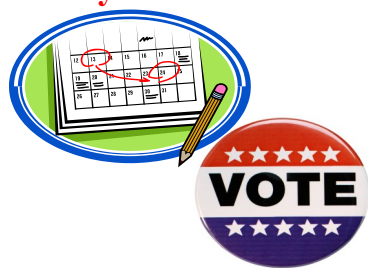
mium costs affects not only state retirees who rely on Medicare, but also those NYSUT retirees who are required (due to geographical location) to enroll in a version of the state's Empire Plan. These NYSUT retirees, therefore, have no input into their health care benefit changes since the unions representing state employees negotiate the Empire Plan. Failure of the State to fully reimburse retirees' IRMAA payments is a diminishment of their established benefits.

**WHAT YOU NEED TO DO:**

- Please contact your state legislators by phone or letter.
- Go to NYSUT website which is [mac.nysut.org](http://mac.nysut.org). It is very user-friendly. Select one or more of the links to your legislators and vote accordingly. See **Bits and Pieces** on page 3 for more details.

Come to your RC 21 meetings to learn more about our education crisis and our senior benefits. The future of education and the security of retired educators in New York State are at stake.

**Mark your calendar:**



**School Budget Vote is May 21, 2013**

**Every vote counts. Make your voice heard.**

If you will be away, be sure to get an absentee ballot from your District Office.



**Mark your calendar:**

**April 30th General Meeting - 10:15 AM West Islip Library**

**Speaker will be a specialist on Medicare and Social Security.**

**Benefits and eligibility issues will be discussed.**

**Stay informed by participating.**

# Bits and Pieces

## What's new about Fraud.org

The National Consumers League is relaunching its website Fraud.org. The new website includes an updated search function for consumers; content that is easily shareable via social networks so that consumers can quickly pass along fraud warnings; the ability to sign up for regular fraud alerts to help consumers stay abreast of emerging scams; and the ability for consumers who have been victims of fraud or have been approached by scammers to file complaints through the site's secure online complaint form.

## RC 21 Website Update

Mike Eiermann, Webmaster for RC 21, is working on updating the new aft website. We can now easily get onto the site using the following url:

<http://rc21.ny.aft.org/>

You can access our newsletters in a printable .pdf file by choosing NEWS from the top menu bar and then choosing RC 21 Newsletters. Mike is working on updating all the headings and pages of our site. Stay tuned for more improvements.

## To be Admitted or not to be Admitted.

If a hospital classifies your visit as an "Observation Stay," you may get a big bill. Medicare recipients who need more time to recuperate after leaving the hospital could be hit with unexpected expenses, if they don't qualify for the standard 20-day stay in a nursing home. This is often because their hospitalization was billed as an outpatient "observation," instead of an inpatient admission. Medicare has recently changed its policies to classify many hospital stays previously constituted as inpatient stays as outpatient stays. These include some hospital stays that involve major bone fractures and the patient remaining in the hospital for several days. Under normal circumstances, Medicare recipients who require additional care after a hospital visit are entitled to a 20-day stay in a nursing home, as long as their hospitalization lasted at least 3 days. However, if their hospital stay was classified as outpatient rather than inpatient, Medicare does not pay for the nursing home stay, which can cost hundreds of dollars a day. The inpatient admission of the patient must be made by a physician.

If you have been affected by a high "observation status" bill, please let the Alliance know at:

[aracomms@retiredamericans.org](mailto:aracomms@retiredamericans.org).

Alliance for Retired Americans  
815 16th Street, NW, Fourth Floor Washington, DC 20006  
(202) 637 - 5399  
On line at: [www.retiredamericans.org](http://www.retiredamericans.org)  
[aracomms@retiredamericans.org](mailto:aracomms@retiredamericans.org)  
February 8, 2013

## Do you have the Travel Bug ?

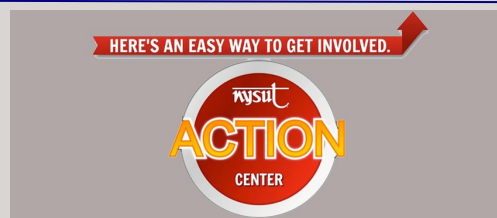


The Israel Trip, which was cancelled, is being planned again for May, 2014. If you are interested, please call Joan Perrini at (516) 680 - 6163 or (631) 587 - 1151 (West Islip Retired Teachers Office). Details to follow.



The Cuba trip was so successful that some people have expressed interest in returning. Do you want to visit Cuba while the window is still open? Let Joan Perrini know at (516) 680 - 6163 or (631) 587 - 1151 (West Islip Retired Teachers Office).

*These trips are not sanctioned by NYSUT*



GEORGE PEABODY:

*Education: a debt due from present to future generations.*

### Spotlight 21

A Publication of NYSUT Retiree Council 21  
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Forward changes in addresses/names to NYSUT and/or your local.

Dorothy Zuckerman, NYSUT Retiree Services Consultant  
631-273-8822; e-mail: [dzuckerm@nysutmail.org](mailto:dzuckerm@nysutmail.org)

**Join Dorothy Zuckerman on a tour of  
Edinburgh & the Castles of Scotland**

**10 Days / Departing: July 4, 2013**

**Cost: \$3,259**

**Your Tour Includes**

- Round -trip airfare & Transfers
- 8 nights in handpicked hotels
- Breakfast daily, 4 three-course dinners
- Private deluxe motor coach
- Multilingual Tour Director
- Select entrance fees

**Reserve Your Space with a \$300 Deposit**

Contact Dorothy Zuckerman:  
(631) 567 - 3866  
dotzee@optonline.net  
Tour code: 20681806  
For more information visit:  
Dorothyzuckerman.grouptoursite.com

*This trip is not sanctioned by NYSUT.*

**Joan Perrini, Simonne Harkavy, & Marilyn Aitken  
are planning a**

**California Rail Discovery Trip**

Featuring Napa Valley Wine Train, Sierra Nevada Rail Journey,  
San Francisco Bay Cruise, Lake Tahoe Paddlewheeler Cruise, City  
tours of San Francisco, Sausalito, Old Town Sacramento and more.

**7 Days / Departing in Late October**

**Cost approximately \$2,200**

**Your Tour Includes:**

- Round -trip Airfare
- Tour Director
- 9 Meals- (6-B, 1-L, & 2-D)
- Motor Coach Transportation
- Admissions & Sightseeing per Itinerary
- Hotel Transfers & Baggage Handling

Contact Joan Perrini:  
(516) 680 -6163  
Simonne Harkavy: Marilyn Aitken:  
(631) 661 - 4446 (631) 567 - 5928  
For more information come to  
General Membership Meetings

*This trip is not sanctioned by NYSUT.*



**RC 21 Calendar  
2012 - 2013**

**Executive Board Meetings  
NYSUT Office 10:15 AM**

**April 9**

**May 7**

**June 4**

**General Membership Meetings  
West Islip Library 10:15 AM**

**April 30**

**May 21**

**June 25 - Awards Dinner @  
Mansion at West Sayville**

**Upcoming Events**

**May 8, 2013**

**West Point Tour**

**Flyers will be available  
At General Meetings**

**June, 2013 TBA**

**Museum of Moving Images**

**Queens, New York**

**Flyers will be available  
At General Meetings**

**August 1, 2013**

**Theatre Trip**

***Singing In The Rain***

**Get details & registration forms on line at our website:**

**<http://rc21.ny.aft.org>**

**Reservations accepted on a first-come basis.**



**Next General Membership Meetings:**

**April 30th and May 21st**

**10:15 AM @ West Islip Library**

# RC 21 Members Visit Cuba



