



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Friend,

The New York State Assembly Committee on Governmental Employees has jurisdiction over proposals pertaining to civil service requirements and regulations (including the Taylor Law, ratifying state employee contracts, hearing procedures and civil service lists) and to public pensions and the public pension system. A majority of the proposals pertain to pension systems.

While the state budget has passed, other legislative priorities continue. The Governmental Employees Committee has worked on and passed a number of legislative initiatives which are highlighted in this newsletter.

You will find in this newsletter the Committee's commitment to working men and women. Through passing ground breaking health care initiatives that protect health care for families across the state to maintaining much-needed services that we rely on every day, the Committee is dedicated to the needs of the workforce.

I would like to thank all the committee members and staff for their dedication and attention to the needs of our state's public employees. Additionally, I would like to thank the public employee organizations, their representatives and the many government officials whose input on legislation is invaluable.

If you have any questions or concerns about issues or legislation before the Committee, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peter J. Abbate Jr." The signature is written in dark ink on a light background.

Peter J. Abbate, Jr.
Chairman

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Changes to World Trade Center Benefits

Over the years the legislature has passed laws that would protect and benefit those first responders and their families that were exposed to elements in connection with the World Trade Center tragedy of September 11, 2001. This year the legislature has worked to expand and clarify some of these benefits afforded to survivors and their dependents.

A7631/S5585 - This bill would clarify existing law to provide children of firefighters and police officers who were killed in the line of duty during the rescue and recovery of World Trade Center victims with ten additional points on a civil service examination when the position is located in the same municipality where the applicant's deceased parent served.



A7803A/S5759A - This bill would implement the recommendations of the September Eleventh Worker Protection Task Force (“911 Task Force”) to correct the limitations in existing disability laws. This bill would include members of New York City pension systems who were inadvertently excluded from prior legislation, clarify the definition of “qualifying conditions” and reopen and extending the expired statutory deadline for filing statement of participation.

Pension Stabilization Reform



In an effort to combat taxpayer cost and provide fair pensions, the New York State Assembly passed a pension stabilization program in this year's budget that would benefit taxpayers and ease the burden on the pension systems. Under the plan, local governments could opt into the plan which would lock contribution rates at 12% to 20%. It also gives municipalities a longer period of time for repayment if they belong to the program. This program also allows school districts to defer payment of an agreed upon portion of their pension costs for seven years. Their rate of payment would start at 14% and after two years rise to a maximum of 18%.

Assembly Institutes Sound Contract Arrangements That Save Taxpayers Millions

This year the legislature worked closely with the Governor to assure taxpayers the level of services they expect to receive would be maintained. The legislature

ratified a few statewide contracts that will save taxpayers of this state tens of millions of dollars this year alone. (Bill Numbers A8032, A8030).

Matters at Home



The Governmental Employees Committee also has an impact regarding matters within the community. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the Chairman and his colleagues, they are happy to announce they have prevented local firehouses, as well as State and City-run senior centers from being closed this year. In addition to keeping those vital services open, they also fought to protect teachers and educators from facing layoffs. Assemblyman Abbate and the Committee understand that safeguarding life-saving services and maintaining the quality of education for our children is of the utmost importance.

Public Employee Pension Reforms

One of the hardest things we face is maintaining the workability and sustainability of the public pension fund. When we make decisions on such funds we take into careful consideration the effect our decision will have on the taxpayers of the state. These decisions assure a greater return on investment in the fund, thus lowering localities' contributions giving taxpayers much-needed relief. Below are a few pieces of legislation the Assembly passed in order to accomplish these objectives:



A4983A/S4761A - This bill would clarify the maximum salary used to calculate the ordinary death benefit for members with a date of membership on or after July 1, 1973. The maximum salary specified under this bill for calculation of retirement benefits would be \$163,033.

A6578A/S4186A - In an attempt to correct the inequity to members who originally opted into Chapter 96 of the Laws of 1995 and partook in the 55/25 Pension program this bill would provide for the refund of certain member contributions made under the transit 55/25 program.

A6942/S5053 - This bill would allow larger lump sum payments to be made under the partial lump sum payment program for certain members of the New York State and Local Police and Fire Retirement System. This bill would increase the amount of the lump sum payment to up to 25% at retirement.

A7822A/S5091 - This bill would reinstate Tier 2 status to certain members of the New York State and Local Police and Fire Retirement System who were hired upon the expiration of Tier 2 (July 1, 2009) and the inception of Tier 5.

Assisting our Veterans



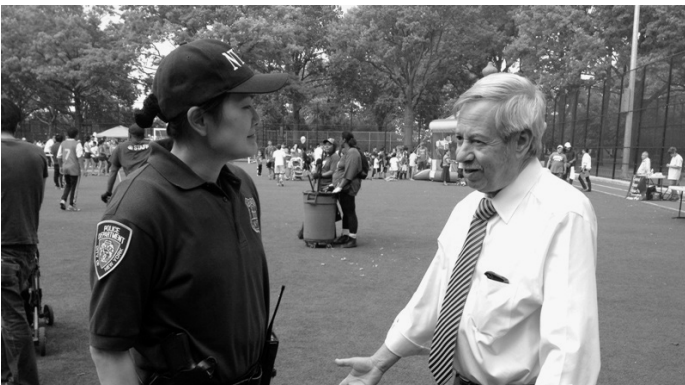
After September 11th, 2001 New Yorkers across the state, including city and state employees were called to active military duty for homeland security purposes. In accordance with existing civil service principles and to assist public employees that answered this call, the New York State Legislature acted in 2005 to ensure that the time served in this capacity would be reflected in their credited retirement plans. Due to a technical error this legislation omitted members of the New York City Retirement System. This legislation would bring current law in line with the original bill's stated purpose. (Bill Number A6914)

*News from the
NYS Assembly Committee on*

Governmental Employees

www.assembly.state.ny.us

Extensive Training for First Responders Our Communities Rely on Most



This year the Assembly passed a measure that would require the city of New York to provide fire officers 40 hours of in-classroom training and field training on contemporary fire codes, as well as 40 hours of in-classroom training and field training in building and construction codes and local city ordinances. This curriculum will benefit both the fire department and the taxpayers they serve by ensuring a more knowledgeable and effective body of fire officers who are up to date in terms of these readily changing codes and ordinances. (Bill Number A6579)