



The Siren

Important News and Updates for NYSPFFA Members

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UPDATE FROM THE STATE CAPITOL

The 2012 legislative session is over, and all of the Senators and Assemblymembers are back in their districts. Most are running for re-election this fall. Some face primaries on Thursday, September 13th, while all 213 legislative seats are being contested on November 6th.

Three bills that NYSPFFA pushed for this session are still awaiting action by the Governor. They are:

[A.9943-C \(Brindisi\)](#) / [S.7013-C \(Little\)](#) - **Municipal Ambulance Bill - addresses the immediate need of the cities of Utica and Glens Falls, whose continued operation of their existing ambulance services are in jeopardy of being terminated unless it is signed into law. *Please contact the Governor's staff to express your support for this bill.* Find out how to do so [here](#).**

[A.5739-A \(Abbate\)](#) / [S.7209 \(Libous\)](#) **MRSA Disability - extends accidental disability benefits to those police officers and firefighters that have contracted methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus while on the job. The New York State Retirement System has determined the fiscal impact of this bill to be negligible.**

[A.9367-A \(Abbate\)](#) / [S.6436 \(Golden\)](#) **NYC Training Bill - adds a new General Municipal Law section, 209-ff, requiring the training of NYC fire officers in changes to building and construction codes and local ordinances in NYC.**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the information in this newsletter, please contact Joseph Dougherty or John Black at 518-436-0751. For any other questions or concerns, please contact your NYSPFFA leadership — Mike McManus or Sam Fresina — 518-436-8827.

STATE CONSIDERING CONTROL BOARD FOR AILING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS?

Last month, [press reports](#) said that Gov. Cuomo has floated the idea of a “super control board” to oversee local governments facing financial problems. If history is any guide, this is a proposal to be concerned about.

According to these reports, a state-appointed control board would oversee a local government’s finances. It would have the authority to reopening negotiated labor contracts. Nassau County and Buffalo are under control boards today.

We think this is a very bad idea. The bad economy is no reason why elected officials should not have to do their jobs.

BIG WIN FOR LABOR IN NASSAU COUNTY

Last week, Nassau County officials learned that their local law to allow for the county to unilaterally alter labor contracts violates the U.S. Constitution.

The court said that the parts of the recently enacted Nassau County law that would have allowed the modification of contracts, imposed furloughs and cut employee benefits cannot go into effect (though it allowed other parts of the law to stand).

This decision is a big win for unions. Lawmakers cannot be allowed to run roughshod over negotiated contracts — period.

COMPTROLLER REPORTS BAD NEWS ON PENSION FUND PERFORMANCE

State Comptroller [Tom DiNapoli](#), sole trustee of the state’s [pension fund](#) for state and local government employees, recently reported a negative 1 percent return on investment in the first quarter of 2012.

DiNapoli said that the pension fund has been “weathering uncertainty in the financial markets.” New York’s pension is the third largest in the nation; it has over 654,000 members, and supports more than 400,000 retirees.

The good news that is this is just a quarterly report. Over the long run, the state and local pension fund assumes it will earn an annual return of 7.5 percent.

But fund losses such as this may mean higher pension contributions for local governments – giving more ammunition to people who want to further cut the state’s social safety net.

CILENTO UNANIMOUSLY RE-ELECTED AS AFL-CIO HEAD

Last month, Mario Cileto was [unanimously re-elected](#) by the [NYS AFL-CIO](#) to a full four year term as president.

New York’s AFL-CIO is the nation’s largest labor federation, with some 2.5 million members.

POLL SHOWS ROMNEY WELL BEHIND IN NY

A poll [released](#) last week shows that Gov. Mitt Romney trails President Obama in New York state by a large margin. It also shows that Gov. Cuomo continues to have strong support from New York voters.