

- * President's Corner
- * ERSRI Board Elections
- * Annual Holiday Party
- * Paula Akers Memorial Scholarship

R. I. AFT / R THOUGHTS

President's Corner

Well, the dirty deed has been done (dirt cheap!), and aside from the major disappointment in some legislators whose election was made possible by public employees and their unions, we can take some solace from the outstanding united effort that was put into the campaign to fight against the changes. The amended bill, while still horrendous with respect to the COLA and other provisions, at least maintained many members in the system who would otherwise have lost eligibility because of work schedules/hours.

Where do we go from here? As I've said since last spring, these matters will be resolved in the courts. Additionally, those elements which joined forces against us must be brought to account. At this writing, a meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 29, at the AFL-CIO to formulate both legal and organizational responses. I will inform our members in January, when we receive our last COLA for a while, what the game plan will be going forward.

The legal battle for our issue is likely to be protracted and costly. RI AFT/R Executive Council members will meet on December 13, 2011, to discuss and decide how we will meet our financial obligations for legal expenses. At my meeting with AFT retiree members of the Standing Committee on Retiree Issues in Washington, DC, on Nov. 16-17 (the day of the "vote"), I received informal assurance that we would receive some support from our national parent. Our two-day meeting made it painfully clear that we are not alone in these "pension reform" battles, with other state legislatures like Michigan lined up for sessions that begin in January.

I expect that the RIRSC coalition will proceed expeditiously, but from a legal standpoint, retirees are not adversely impacted until next January. I would anticipate that the first legal salvo from us would be to petition the courts for injunctive relief to prevent the COLA suspension from taking effect in January 2013.

Our organizational response to the forces allied against us will be played out over time. In the meantime, however, I have discussed with the RI AFT/R Executive Council interim actions which can be taken by individual members. For example, presidents of the three institutions of higher learning, RIC, CCRI, and URI, collectively signed an op-ed letter endorsing the pension legislation. If you are a graduate of one of these institutions, we suggest you contact their Alumni Association and inform them that you will no longer support the institution financially; you may also request to be taken off their mailing list. Any other non-profits who were a part of the EngageRI coalition, such as Crossroads, should receive the same communication. We will get out a boycott list following the meeting on November 29.

The average teacher retiree pension is about \$42,000. Forgone COLA income, compounded at 3% for five years, is \$19,674, the amount that the average retired teacher will contribute towards the pension fund's unfunded liability during the first five years of the new system, beginning in 2013. Feel free to inform any entity from which you are withdrawing future financial support that you consider their lost income as their contribution to the unfunded liability of the pension fund, since you will need to make up for lost income.

Fraternally,
Roger P. Boudreau

ERSRI Board Elections

Elections for representatives from organized labor to the Board of Trustees for the Employees Retiree System of Rhode Island are scheduled for the month of January 2012. Election information and biographies of the candidates will be mailed to system members in December, with return mail ballots arriving between late December and the beginning of January.

Municipal representative seats (MERS) are uncontested. The two retiree representative seats and the two teacher representative seats are being contested. For the retiree seats: incumbents **Roger Boudreau**, President of RI AFT/R Local 8037R; and **Michael Boyce**, Municipal Vice President of AFSCME Council 94 Retiree Chapter are being challenged by Lucille Mota-Costa, a former teacher in West Warwick and former member of the Warwick School Committee. For the teacher representative seats: incumbents **William Finelli**, an area Vice President for NEARI; and **John Maguire**, Treasurer for the RIFTHP and President of North Providence Teachers Union are being challenged by a Providence teacher and a teacher from North Kingstown.

Support for the four incumbents is shared by AFSCME Council 94 and their retiree chapter, NEARI and their retiree chapter, and the RIFTHP and their retiree chapter. Additionally, organizations affiliated with RIPERC have expressed their support. Each of the organizations will be communicating their support to their respective members. Retirees are encouraged to vote for **Roger and Mike**; teachers are encouraged to vote for **Bill and John**. Please be sure to return ballots as soon as they are received to insure that they are counted by the RI Board of Elections.

Paula Akers Memorial Scholarship

The deadline for submitting applications for the Paula Akers Memorial Scholarship is **March 31, 2012**. Please go to www.rifthp.org/PaulaAkersMemorailScholarship for details. Below are a few things to remember:

The following **prerequisites** must be followed in order to nominate a candidate:

- You must be a current member of the RI AFT/R to nominate a student.
- The student must be related to the member.
- The application must provide the required information and be sent to the RI AFT/R Selection Committee no later than **March 31, 2012**.

The scholarship application must include the following:

- Official high school transcript or college transcript
- Evidence of participation in extra-curricular activities or community activities
- Recommendation from a recent teacher
- Any recognition or awards already received
- A list of colleges, universities, or technology schools to which applications have been sent, including those that have accepted the applicant
- A one-page personal statement indicating any additional information which would be helpful to the committee while considering your application * *The committee does place considerable weight on this portion.*

Annual Holiday Party

When: Friday, January 6, 2012
Where: Fred & Steve's Steakhouse
Twin River Casino
Lincoln, RI
Time: 6:00 p.m.

GREETINGS! THE ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY OF THE RI AFT/R WILL BE HELD ON FRIDAY, JANUARY 6, 2012 AT FRED & STEVE'S STEAKHOUSE, TWIN RIVER CASINO, LINCOLN, RI.

YOU ARE ASKED TO BRING AN UNWRAPPED GIFT SO WE CAN HAVE A GIFT SWAP. WON'T YOU JOIN US FOR SOME LAUGHS AND GOOD FOOD TO RING IN THE NEW YEAR.

**Reservation Deadline - Wednesday,
December 28, 2011**

Please see the enclosed flyer.