

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



The Assembly Committee on Governmental Employees has jurisdiction over proposals pertaining to civil service requirements and regulations such as the Taylor Law, ratifying State employee contracts, hearing procedures and civil service lists, and public pensions and retirement systems. A majority of the proposals that pass through this Committee pertain to public pension systems.

While negotiations on the State budget and other legislative priorities were being negotiated, the Governmental Employees Committee passed a number of legislative initiatives. In this newsletter, you will find the Committee's dedication to the hardworking men and women of our State's municipal workforce from ground-breaking health care initiatives that protect families across New York State to maintaining much-needed services that we rely on every day.

I would like to thank the Committee members, the Assembly leadership, 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 black ink that reads "Peter J. Abbate, Jr." in a cursive script.

Peter J. Abbate, Jr.
Chairman

WORLD TRADE CENTER RESCUE AND RECOVERY LEGISLATION

In 2004, the legislature passed a law establishing a presumptive disability retirement related to exposure to elements in connection with the World Trade Center tragedy of September 11, 2001 (A.11684 of 2004).

This year, the legislature has revisited this issue as it has been acknowledged that several groups of public employees were not covered under the original legislation. With direction from the New York State September 11th Workers Protection Taskforce, the Assembly negotiated a bill with the Senate and the Governor that would do the following:

WTC Health Insurance Bill – A.7901-A:

Officers and employees of New York State and public authorities and municipalities outside New York City, jeopardized their well-being when they assisted in rescue and recovery efforts at the World Trade Center site after tragedy struck in New York City on September 11, 2001. As a result, for the past sixteen years, many of these brave individuals have been faced with a multitude of health issues and need to take a lot of sick time to undergo medical treatment. Although we cannot cure them of their illnesses, we must recognize their ultimate sacrifice and do what we can to help them in their difficult times. As such, this legislation would ensure they have access to unlimited line of duty sick leave so they can receive treatment for their illness and convalesce without loss of their accrued sick leave.



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PROTECTION AND RETENTION OF OUR FIRST RESPONDERS

Over the course of this session, several pieces of legislation were introduced that would protect the individuals that our community relies on most; our police, fire, sanitation, EMT's, and corrections workers. In recognition of the role these individuals play in our society and the risks they take every day when they suit up for work, the Assembly took action on several pieces of legislation to protect our first responders. The ability to retain our public safety workforce so they may teach our incoming recruits life lessons, learned through on the job experience, is also of great importance. Below are a few initiatives to assure that their families will be taken care of after these brave men and women have made the ultimate sacrifice for their communities.

Tier 3 revisions for all Uniforms in New York City – Chapter 61 of the Laws of 2017, Part H:

This law ensures that certain uniformed members continue to receive Accidental Disability Retirement (ADR) benefits regardless of eligibility for Social Security Disability Retirement benefits. In addition, it allows certain uniformed members to be eligible for ADR benefits regardless if they are eligible for Normal Service Retirement benefits.

Fallen Responder's Widows' Cost-of-Living Adjustment – Chapter 76 of the Laws of 2017:

This law extends the escalation of a cost of living increase of approximately 3% for all line-of-duty widows or widowers for fiscal year 2017-18.

Eligible Beneficiaries of Fallen Sanitation Members – A.7185:

This bill would clarify which eligible beneficiaries of New York City sanitation workers are eligible for pension benefits and provide a special accidental death benefit to the beneficiaries of New York City sanitation workers.

EMT/EMS Death Benefit Bill – A.7603:

This bill would provide death benefits to the surviving spouses or domestic partners of emergency medical technicians and advanced emergency medical technicians, who were killed while engaged in the discharge of their duties.



EXTENDING AND ENHANCING CIVIL SERVICE PROTECTIONS



MTA Binding Arbitration – Chapter 63 of the Law of 2017:

This legislation extends from July 1, 2017 to July 1, 2019 certain provisions of the binding arbitration between the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and its labor representatives.

NY Power Authority Binding Arbitration – A.6988:

This bill would include the New York Power Authority in the provisions relating to compulsory arbitration to resolve impasses in collective negotiations.

Extends the Practice of Injunctive Relief – Chapter 70 of the Laws of 2017:

This law will continue to ensure public employees are able to petition before the Public Employment Relations Board or the New York City Board of Collective Bargaining and receive injunctive relief for an improper labor practice charge.

SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS AND THEIR FAMILIES



This legislative session the Assembly negotiated several initiatives that would provide much-needed benefits to our troops while they are away defending our freedom. The dedicated men and women who have served in the military deserve our utmost respect and all the benefits we can provide to them that are befitting of their sacrifice. Below is a modest proposal in recognition of their service.

Civil Service Application Fee Waiver for Veterans – A.1105-B:

This bill would allow the State Civil Service Department to waive the application fees of civil service examinations for original appointments for candidates who were honorably discharged or released under honorable circumstances from service in the armed forces.

Civil Service Credits for All Veterans – A.6416-A:

This bill would allow anyone who was honorably discharged or released under honorable circumstances from service in the armed forces, to receive credits for civil service appointments and promotions. This bill would also remove the time of war requirement and provide parity among the veterans of our armed forces.

EXPANDING DISABILITY BENEFITS AND RETIREMENT BENEFITS FOR THOSE OUR COMMUNITIES RELY ON MOST

Employees Reduced Retirement Age – A.3332:

This bill will allow any Tier 6 member who is a uniformed court officer or peace officer employed by the unified court system to retire without early age reduction upon attaining 30 years of creditable service and age 55. It will also reduce the normal retirement age from 63 to 62, and lessen the reductions in benefits for those who retire prior to normal retirement age.

Court Employees Disability

Clarification – A.3503:

This bill would allow a uniformed court officer or peace officer of the Unified Court System who is injured as a result of a physical assault by an assailant while in service to be entitled for accidental disability retirement unless the contrary can be proven.

Optional 20-year Retirement Plan: County Opt-in – A.6277:

This bill will allow county correction officers and deputy sheriffs, engaged in correction officer duties, to enroll in a special 20-year retirement plan and receive a pension benefit of one-half of final average salary upon retirement, if the employing county elects to provide such benefits.

Extend the Filing Deadline for Cancer – A.6403:

This bill extends the filing deadline from 2 years to 5 years for disability benefits for certain cancers for active and retired firefighters who are enrolled in the New York State and Local Police and Fire Retirement System.

DMNA Disability – A.8326:

This bill would grant improved disability pensions to airport firefighters and training and safety officers in the NYS Division of Military and Naval Affairs who sustained a disability related to heart disease, lung disease, and certain forms of cancer.



CONTRACTS

This year saw the resolution of a number of contracts between New York State and various bargaining units representing public employees. These contracts are both fair for NYS employees and fiscally sound for the State. The legislature approved a series of bills to implement the contracts with the following negotiating units:

- Public Employees Federation (Chapter 8 of the Laws of 2017)
- Court Employees (Chapter 98 of the Laws of 2017)
- Court Employees CSEA Represented (Chapter 164 of the Laws of 2017)
- Civil Service Employees Association (Chapter 165 of the Laws of 2017)
- Graduate Student Employees (Chapter 166 of the Laws of 2017)

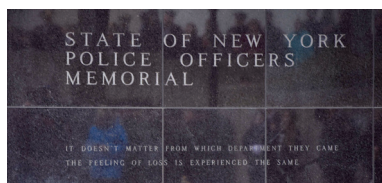
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News from the NYS Assembly Committee on Governmental Employees

Peter J. Abbate, Chair • Carl E. Heastie, Speaker

MORE ADDITIONS TO FALLEN FIRST RESPONDER MEMORIAL WALL



It is a distressing time when one of our uniformed personnel dies in the line of duty. During this time of grief, it is appropriate to honor these valiant heroes for the honor and dedication they provided to our communities.

This year, Assemblyman Peter Abbate had the distinct honor of representing Speaker Carl Heastie and the NYS Assembly by speaking at the State of New York Police Officers Memorial in Albany. A total of 51 first responders were added to the memorial wall for 2017. This event memorializes those who have fallen in the line of duty and honors their ultimate sacrifice.