

MTA REPORTER

RETIREED The Voice of MTA Retired Members



Share your opinion and expertise! On Wednesday, March 22, join your colleagues, representatives of the MTA Retired Members Committee and guest presenters for the 2023 MTA Retired Spring Brunch. Due to scheduling uncertainties brought on by the pandemic, the traditional in-person Retired Spring Brunches are once more being combined into one virtual event. Updated information will be available at massteacher.org/retired.

With two morning discussion topics, the 2023 Spring Brunch will follow the format of the highly successful 2021 event. An expert on mental wellness for retirees will address the impacts of isolation related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of health and wellness and ways the MTA can offer social opportunities for members. The second discussion session will involve a presentation of the MTA's legislative priorities (which can be viewed in their entirety at massteacher.org/legislation) with an emphasis on how Retired members can get and keep their colleagues involved. The final discussion session will include a question-and-answer period regarding anything in the program.

Registration will begin soon at massteacher.org/retired. A preliminary outline of the Spring Brunch agenda follows:

10 – 10:15 a.m.

**Welcome and Introduction from MTA President Max Page
and MTA Vice President Deb McCarthy**

10:15 – 11 a.m.

**Mental Well-being for Retirees:
The impacts of COVID-19 isolation and what the MTA can offer**

11 a.m. – Noon

MTA Legislative Agenda: How retirees can become more involved

Noon – 12:30 p.m.

**Question-and-Answer Session
Discussion**

RETIREED MEMBERS COMMITTEE 2022-2023

CHAIR

Patrick Patterson, *Ipswich*

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Seth Evans, *Brookline*

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**** Bernadette Murphy, *Roslindale*

Phyllis Neufeld, *Burlington*

*** Robin Smith, *Springfield*

RETIREED MEMBERS ORGANIZER

Robert Whalen

rwhalen@massteacher.org

617.878.8206 ■ 800.392.6175, ext. 8206

FIELD & ORGANIZING COORDINATOR

Renee Gatewood

rgatewood@massteacher.org

617.878.8208 ■ 800.392.6175, ext. 8208

MASSACHUSETTS TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

2 Heritage Drive, 8th Floor

Quincy, MA 02171-2119

800.392.6175 ■ www.massteacher.org

MTA MEMBER BENEFITS, INC.

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MTA MEMBERSHIP DIVISION

617.878.8118 ■ 800.392.6175, ext. 8118

* Elected by the Board

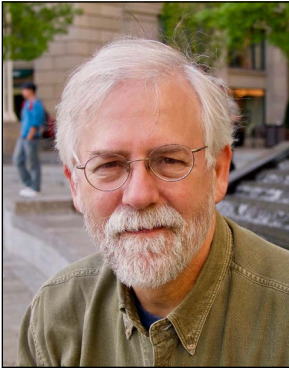
** MTA Board of Directors

*** President's Designee

**** Appointed Active Member

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Patrick Patterson



MTA RMC Chair Patrick Patterson

First there was Dedham, then Brookline, Malden, Haverhill and Woburn. One, two, three, many strikes by educators. Several more locals in negotiations that were dragging on for months moved in the direction of taking a strike vote. That was all that was necessary for towns or cities to settle. One could say

that there is a change in the environment but here we are not talking about climate change.

The money involved in the various agreements was not exorbitant, mostly within the range of the cost of living. Education Support Professionals were the exception, with the agreements beginning to address the issue of equity with a dramatic increase in their salaries. Class size and planning time figured prominently in several recent agreements. What was new and important in many contracts was a demand to address the diversity of educators who are hired. Many communities in Massachusetts have diverse populations and the contracts recognize that it is important for that diversity to be represented in the educators who work with students. Finally, reaching beyond the schools but still connected to the communities, a number of agreements addressed the cost of housing. Whether rented or owned, homes in Massachusetts are expensive and this increasing cost has caused instability in many lives.

Among all the agreements, what stood out was the way in which they moved beyond the stereotypical view that unions are only concerned with compensation. Compensation was not out of line with past agreements, and when there were increases that were, they brought districts into line with comparable or neighboring communities, or in the case of ESPs, moved them in the direction of a living wage.

When an agreement contains provisions for increased prep time to prepare for work with students in the classroom, reduced class size and increased diversity among faculty – so the individual needs of students can be addressed – and a call is made to stabilize the living situations of students and families, including a moratorium on evictions, all show a concern for the focus of our work. To repeat a phrase that I heard on the picket line in Woburn: “Our working conditions are students’ learning conditions.” That indicates what is involved in public education. There is a care and concern for the development of students and a desire to provide them with the best possible conditions for that development within the school and beyond.

It is for these reasons that educators need the right to strike. Barry Davis, first vice president of the Haverhill Education Association, said it succinctly: “At some point, you have to choose between doing what is right and doing what is legal. We chose what is right, and that is to stand up for our students.”

The tradition of political philosophy that I taught for many years tells us that when there is a difference between what is considered right and what is considered settled law there will be conflict. The history of labor and civil rights struggles provides ample examples of such a conflict between right and law. Making the right to strike a legal right would resolve this conflict.

I always end this column with suggestions of what you can do as members. In addition to writing your legislators and telling them to pass into law the right to strike that is part of the legislative agenda of the MTA, you could attend a rally, walk the picket line, show your support for your active union colleagues. Many of the bargaining sessions are open, which means not only local members can attend, but also members from other unions and the community. And the Wisdom Warriors are always an option! ■

If you have some news from your local retired group that you wish to share, please send it to **Robert Whalen** at rwhalen@massteacher.org.

if you're looking for news, make sure to visit and bookmark massteacher.org/retired

NOW IS THE TIME FOR HIGHER ED FOR ALL

Stephanie Marcotte and Catherine Santiago

After decades of underfunding, our public higher education institutions are at a breaking point. Students carry the heavy burden of the increasing costs of higher education. Graduates are quickly faced with large sums of student loan debt. Faculty and staff are seeing increases in living expenses and low pay. Positions go unfilled as pay remains low. Buildings fall into disrepair.

The passage of the Fair Share Amendment provides an opportunity for a new revenue stream for public higher education. Now is the time for Higher Ed For All!

Please join us on Tuesday, February 28, at the State House, for the Higher Ed For All Advocacy Day!

During the summer of 2022, students, faculty, and staff from throughout the Commonwealth worked with Noah Berger, director of the MTA Center for Education Policy and Practice, to examine the crisis in higher education. Their work would later provide the foundation for the Higher Ed For All campaign, which consists of four pillars: wages and working conditions, debt-free public higher education, green and healthy buildings, and student support.

Together, these four pillars provide a holistic framework to raise up public higher education in the Commonwealth. The Higher Ed For All campaign has continued to grow. In addition to the amazing work that our MTA members are doing, a Higher Ed For All Coalition has formed. This group includes unions, organizations, policy and research groups and student organizations.

All see the four priorities of the Higher Ed For All campaign as vital to the future of public higher education in Massachusetts. On December 1, 2022, the campaign coalition hosted a briefing at the State House. The room was filled with students, faculty, staff, community partners and legislators from across the state. Speakers highlighted the need to address barriers to higher education that disproportionately impact students of color and first-generation college students, the longstanding underfunding of higher education by the state, and the daunting list of failed recruitment searches.



While the Fair Share Amendment adds a new revenue stream for public colleges and universities, it alone will not fix decades of underfunding. The *Cherish Act* provides an additional opportunity for the Commonwealth to prioritize the full funding of our public colleges and universities. The revised *Cherish Act* is rooted in the four pillars of Higher Ed For All.

On January 19, state representatives Sean Garballey and Patricia Duffy filed a revised version of the *Cherish Act* in the state House of Representatives. This was also submitted in the state Senate on January 20 by state Senator Jo Comerford.

The Higher Ed For All campaign and coalition is just heating up, and there are many more exciting moments to come. We hope to encourage legislators to support the *Cherish Act*!

Please join us for the Higher Ed For All Advocacy Day on February 28, 2023 from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the State House. Free bus transportation from multiple locations throughout the state, as well as food and coffee, will be provided.

This is an opportunity to lobby legislators, hear testimony from students, faculty, and staff, engage with the media, participate in collective action, and more. We will also hold two Advocacy Day Trainings via Zoom. To register, please visit: <https://www.mobilize.us/massteacher/event/549156/>

To register for the upcoming Advocacy Day, please visit: <https://www.mobilize.us/massteacher/event/548019> ■

“We set the table by winning Question 1, and now it is time to make sure this reinvestment in high-quality, debt-free public higher education happens.”

—MTA President Max Page

REPEAL EFFORT FOR WINDFALL ELIMINATION PROVISION, GOVERNMENT PENSION OFFSET, BEGINS ANEW

Bob Whalen

On December 31, the 117th Congress came to an end, and with it so did the Social Security Fairness Act of 2021. The bill, H.R. 82, had been filed in January 2021 with the hope that we would finally see the repeal of two Social Security offsets that impact educators – the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO). It didn't happen, but the effort to repeal came closer than it has so far.

Many MTA retirees experience the impact of the WEP and GPO each month and its repeal is a priority of the MTA. But to be sure we are all on the same page about the details of each bill, let's review both.

The WEP reduces the Social Security retirement and disability benefits of people who had careers in which they worked in jobs that deducted Social Security taxes, as well as held jobs that did not deduct Social Security taxes. As an example, this would include full-time educators who take part-time or summer jobs to make ends meet. It would also affect people who switched careers, moving from a private industry or company into public education, or vice-versa.

The GPO reduces the Social Security spousal or survivor benefits of workers who get a government pension (either federal, state or local) but who did not pay Social Security taxes themselves. As a result, two-thirds of the government pension is deducted from the Social Security benefit. In 90 percent of these cases, the GPO fully eliminates spousal or survivor benefits through Social Security.

The WEP and GPO rules were intended to prevent beneficiaries who work outside the Social Security system from receiving overly generous Social Security payments, ensuring a more equitable program. Originally, the WEP was intended to equalize the Social Security benefit formula for workers with similar earning histories, both inside and outside of the system. However, in practice, it unfairly penalizes many public employees.

The WEP and GPO affect Social Security for public sector retirees in 27 states: Massachusetts, California, Colorado, Illinois, Louisiana, Ohio, Texas, Florida, New York, Nevada, Connecticut, Kentucky, Minnesota, Georgia, Missouri, Michigan, Tennessee, Wisconsin, Washington, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Alaska, Maine, Hawaii, Montana, New Mexico and New Hampshire.



With 305 co-sponsors, representing a supermajority, the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee approved H.R. 82 in late September. The act would have fully repealed the WEP and the GPO, releasing their impact on the Social Security program and providing much-needed relief for public sector retirees throughout the country. With more than 300 co-sponsors in the U.S. House of Representatives, the Social Security Fairness Act was eligible for a final vote on the House floor before moving to the U.S. Senate. But the House was considering other WEP and GPO legislative options, in addition to the Social Security Fairness Act. These included reforming the WEP by developing a new formula to make Social Security benefits proportional to what an individual paid into Social Security during their career. House members were not able to resolve their differences and no floor votes were taken. Thus, no legislation relating to retiree benefits moved on to the Senate for final approval.

The reform bill that the House chose to debate, instead of H.R. 82, was first introduced in 2019 by U.S. Representative Richard Neal, a Massachusetts Democrat. The Public Servants Protection and Fairness Act, or H.R. 4540, would establish a fairer formula that would pay future retirees Social Security benefits in proportion to the share of their earnings that was taxed for Social Security purposes. It would not affect educators who have already retired. For those current retirees, the act includes a guarantee, in the form of relief payments, that ensures no cuts to their current benefits will be made. Current retirees subject to the Windfall Elimination Provision will receive \$150 a month

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LEGISLATIVE REPORT: AN UPDATE FROM MTA GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

The legislative priorities of the Massachusetts Teachers Association for the 2023-2024 session were the result of a robust process that included extensive input from MTA members, recommendations from the union's member-led Government Relations Committee, and the review and approval of the MTA Board of Directors.

The priorities for the current, two-year session focus on making transformational investments in public prekindergarten through higher education, ending the high-stakes testing regime, ensuring the right to strike for educators and certain other public sector workers, and ensuring a dignified retirement for retired educators. These priorities together articulate a clear vision for moving the Commonwealth's public schools and colleges forward.

Specifically, the MTA's legislative agenda includes:

- **The Cherish Act**, sponsored by state senators Jo Comerford, Robyn Kennedy, Paul Mark and Jake Oliveira, as well as state representatives Sean Garballey and Pat Duffy.

This bill creates a framework for adequate public higher education funding levels; ensures debt-free public higher education for all; supports the recruitment and retention of high-quality faculty and staff; and invests in green and healthy public college and university buildings.

- **An Act Empowering Students and Schools to Thrive**, sponsored by state senators Jo Comerford, Adam Gomez and Liz Miranda, as well as state representatives Jim Hawkins and Sam Montaña.

This bill eliminates the high-stakes components of the MCAS, including the graduation exam requirement and state receiverships.

- **An Act Uplifting Families and Securing the Right to Strike for Certain Public Employees**, sponsored by state Senator Becca Rausch and state representatives Mike Connolly and Erika Uyterhoeven.

This bill allows educators and other public employees, except for public safety personnel, to legally strike after six months of failed negotiations with their employer.

- **An Act to Provide Fair and Affordable Public Retiree Benefits**, sponsored by state Senator Julian Cyr and state Representative Dan Donahue.

This bill includes several important provisions aimed at ensuring greater economic security for public-sector retirees. Specifically, the bill would:



- o Immediately increase the dollar base on which the annual state pension COLA is calculated, from \$13,000 to \$18,000, and over time raise the base to align with Social Security's maximum benefit for an individual worker retiring at full retirement age (\$43,524 in 2023).
- o Freeze the health insurance premium contribution share for current municipal retirees at the percentage they are paying upon the effective date of this legislation and lock in the percentage for future retirees based on their retirement date.
- o Create a mechanism to cap out-of-pocket expenses for public retirees who are not Medicare-eligible at \$2,500 for individual coverage and \$5,000 for family coverage.

We can expect the MTA's priority bills to each be referred to a legislative committee and assigned a bill number at some point in the coming weeks. Following that, the next development will be the scheduling of legislative hearings where each bill will be publicly considered by its respective committee. Legislative hearings will likely be taking place through this fall on dates determined by each committee.

In addition to advocating for the four priority bills detailed above, the MTA will also be fighting for the allocation of Fair Share Amendment revenue and other state funds in the fiscal year 2024 state budget to support transformational investments in public higher education and in preK-12 education above and beyond the funding provided by the *Student Opportunity Act*.

For updates on the MTA's priority bills, FY2024 budget priorities and the legislative process, please continue to visit massteacher.org/legislation.

Thank you for your advocacy! ■

REPORT FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS – JANUARY 2023

Andrei Joseph



MTA RMC Member Andrei Joseph

I am very pleased to report that the MTA Board of Directors voted to offer a remote option for this year's Annual Meeting of Delegates, which will be held at the MassMutual Center in Springfield, on Friday, April 28, and Saturday, April 29.

As with many matters, this was not as simple as one might imagine. While age and medical conditions make many retirees

particularly vulnerable to COVID-19, most active members are working inside on a daily basis with unmasked throngs in less-than-safe buildings. So, there was extensive debate among board members that raised multiple issues.

I presented and spoke in support of a motion from the Executive Committee to the board that provided for a hybrid meeting. With respect to the staff who were overburdened in 2022 with multiple last-minute changes from delegates (in person to remote, cancel my hotel room, and so on), we included a clause that this year delegates should choose their in-person or remote status and then, barring an emergency, not change. There were more than 150 changes last year.

I wish to express my appreciation to the MTA Health and Safety Committee who supported us with a strong letter to every board member that addressed health concerns and the safety of the facility. Those factors should concern every member – active and retired – who intends to participate in person at the 2023 Annual Meeting. MassMutual Center representatives claim they have hosted multiple events without becoming a super-spreader. The facility has its MERV-11 filters changed four times a year. Yet, these filters do not meet the standard recommended by our Health and Safety Committee. MTA staff will look into improvements as well as checking on the number of air changes per hour.

While the board debate began centered around issues of safety, it didn't take long for amendments, and amendments

to the amendments, to tackle issues of the nature of our meetings. Some argued, intensely, for in-person meetings whenever possible, elevating the value of being in the same room, developing personal relationships, cultivating new leadership and enriching our democracy. They asserted that the remote option should not be used for convenience, but only to provide reassurance and comfort regarding COVID safety to those in need.

Others argued the opposite, that a remote option allows more members to participate in our democracy. Not only is it more convenient but it lowers costs to local unions who will be more likely to have a full delegation participate if unburdened from the price of hotels, food and transportation.

We continued to address multiple concerns. Why not hire seasonal conference workers to lessen the staff load? It is difficult to find the people and supervise them. What about the cost of a hybrid meeting? Democracy is expensive and we should foot the bill if we want to be inclusive. The additional cost for a hybrid meeting was estimated at \$75,000. Do we have a line item in the budget for Annual Meeting? Yes, we have budgeted \$400,000.

Eventually, board members returned to the main motion. And, centering our attention on safety, equity and inclusion, the hybrid meeting plan passed comfortably. We will continue to be faced with this issue both next year and in the extended future.

In other matters:

Staff Pensions: Anne Wass, chair of the MTA Retirement Pension Committee, which oversees retirement plans for staff, reported that the plan is in excellent shape and 96 percent funded.

Climate Change: Michael Kozuch, a member of the Newton Teachers Association, and a member of the MTA Climate Task Force, offered a presentation about how to reduce the carbon footprint of the MTA. Several things were discussed, from our use of paper to electric vehicles to

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If you have some news from your local retired group that you wish to share, please send it to **Robert Whalen** at rwhalen@massteacher.org.

if you're looking for news, make sure to visit and bookmark [massteacher.org/retired](https://www.massteacher.org/retired)

OUR UNION NEEDS THE WISDOM WARRIORS, AND THEY NEED YOU!

Calling on retired MTA members to show up to support:

- Locals and their issues.
- The MTA legislative agenda.

Wisdom Warriors is a statewide program of the Retired Members Committee of the MTA. We have coordinators in both eastern and western Massachusetts, and we welcome all retired MTA members as an important way to stay involved with our union!

The Wisdom Warriors provide solidarity and encouragement to locals in need, demonstrate union solidarity, and engage in friendship and fun while supporting MTA-sponsored legislation and our broader mission to champion public education. While frequently injecting song and humor into otherwise challenging situations, the particular manifestation of our solidarity varies according to the issue, the circumstance, and the members' needs.

We have set up an email list of retired MTA members who are willing to be contacted when we receive a "bat signal" request to support a local struggle or a statewide action. If you can participate in the action, that's great. If not, don't worry about it!



At a recent action in Quincy, the Wisdom Warriors showed support for their union colleagues. From left are Mike Murphy, president of the Weymouth Education Association, Gayle Carvalho, president of the Quincy Education Association and Joe Herosy, an MTA Retired Members Committee member.

To join our list, simply send an email to mtawisdomwarriors@gmail.com with your contact information. Please include where you live. You will then be contacted by either the eastern or western coordinator to get you on the list.

Join us! ■

FINANCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMS FROM MTA BENEFITS

A Message From MTA Benefits

Imagine – you've planned a vacation with family, which might include children, grandchildren, even extended family members and you're thrilled to be together again. As lovely as this sounds, unpredictable situations can arise while traveling, such as an accident, asthma attack or sudden sickness. Repatriation, vehicle return and escort transportation are just a few of the many valuable services that are extended to MASA Medical Transport Solutions members.

In emergency situations, MASA members should always first call the local crisis number for assistance. Once a bill is received for services rendered, that bill is sent to MASA for payment. In non-urgent situations, members should call MASA directly, and the company will work with physicians to get the individual to the most appropriate emergency care location. Even if worldwide travel isn't on

As an MTA member, you are entitled to the discounts and programs offered by MTA Benefits.

www.mtabenefits.com

your radar, MASA can be used for medical situations that may arise at home or at work.

Thanks to MASA Medical Transport Solutions, MTA members can travel with peace of mind. For \$27 per month, members will be protected with lifesaving services and coverages – most of which are not covered by insurance. Want to extend protection to family members? Sign up for a family plan for just \$35 per month. For more information, visit www.mtabenefits.com/masa. ■

HONOR OUR OWN AWARD NOMINATIONS

Each year, the MTA Retired Members Committee sponsors the Honor Our Own award.

The award honors Retired MTA members for their outstanding influence on students, beginning educators and association members. Please think about a deserving individual to nominate. Guidelines include demonstration of professional responsibility and achievement in one's field; displays of leadership, creativity or innovation; evidence of the nominee's impact on the school community, students and the association; and examples of how the nominee has improved the image of public education.

This recognition is open to Retired members who worked in public schools, colleges or universities, including as Education Support Professionals.

"HONOR OUR OWN"



AWARD

The nomination form, which is due June 30, 2023, will be included in the March/April issue of the Retired Reporter and can be found at www.massteacher.org/honourourown.



UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION TODAY TO

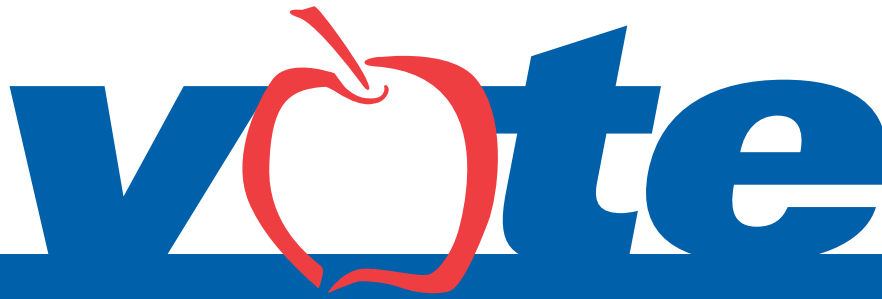
Get an MTA Retired face mask

Send your updated email address, mailing address and preferred phone number to

RETIRED@MASSTEACHER.ORG

FREQUENTLY REQUESTED CONTACT INFORMATION

Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement System (MTRS) www.mass.gov/mtrs	State Board of Retirement www.mass.gov/treasury/retirement/state-board-of-retire
MTRS Headquarters 617.679.6877 500 Rutherford Avenue, Suite 210 Charlestown, MA 02129-1628	SBR Boston Office 617.367.7770 One Winter Street, 8th Floor Boston, MA 02108
MTRS Western Office 413.784.1711 One Monarch Place, Suite 510 Springfield, MA 01144-4028	SBR Springfield Office 413.730.6135 463 Dwight Street, Room 109 Springfield, MA 01103
Questions regarding your MTA Member ID Card or Calendar can be directed to: Renee Gatewood – rgatewood@massteacher.org – 617.878.8000, ext. 8208	



VOICE OF TEACHERS FOR EDUCATION

Elections matter.

They also cost money.

The MTA's **VOTE Political Action Committee (PAC)** contributes to candidates for statewide and legislative offices who demonstrate committed support for issues important to active and retired educators, students and public education.

By pooling the contributions of MTA members, the VOTE PAC gives educators a stronger voice in helping to elect candidates who will champion the MTA's priorities on Beacon Hill and fight against anti-public employee and anti-public education proposals.

**Please consider making
a contribution to the
VOTE PAC today.**

*Your generous contribution to the
VOTE PAC will help us stand with
elected officials who will stand with us.*

Contributions can be made in any amount up to \$500 annually. You may contribute online by visiting massteacher.org/votepac.

Contributions may also be mailed to:
MTA VOTE PAC, 2 Heritage Dr., 8th Floor, Quincy, MA 02171.

When making a contribution, please be sure to provide your name and address, as well as your occupation and employer, if applicable.

MTA's VOTE (Voice of Teachers for Education) and the National Education Association's Fund for Children and Public Education collect voluntary contributions from members for political purposes including, but not limited to, making contributions to and expenditures on behalf of friends of education who are candidates for state and federal office. Seventy percent of contributions will be given to MTA's VOTE PAC and 30 percent will be given to the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education. Contributions are not a condition of membership or employment and are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education from receiving donations from persons other than members of NEA and its affiliates, and their immediate families. All donations from persons other than members of NEA and MTA, and their immediate families, will be returned forthwith.

massteacher.org/votepac

REPEAL EFFORT FOR WEP, GPO OFFSET, BEGINS ANEW *CONTINUED*

in relief payments. While representing a much-needed reform, the proposal only affected the WEP. It would not have impacted the Government Pension Offset.

As the 118th Congress convened this year, the repeal effort began anew. On January 9, U.S. Representative Garret Graves, a Louisiana Republican, and U.S. Representative Abigail Spanberger, a Virginia Democrat, introduced the Social Security Fairness Act of 2023. The new bill, which retains the H.R. 82 number, had more than 100 co-sponsors as the *MTA Retired Reporter* went to press.

Using the momentum from the previous session, the goal is to again reach a supermajority of co-sponsors and force a vote in the House, then move it to the Senate. With 305 co-sponsors last session it is expected to earn broad bipartisan support.

During the week of May 15, 2023, the NEA is planning an Advocacy Week in Washington, D.C. to support the repeal of both the WEP and the GPO. More information will be made available as the plans are finalized.

To dispel a misunderstanding – some retirees have been told incorrectly that the GPO and WEP prohibit Massachusetts public sector retirees from receiving

Social Security benefits at all. As a result, some retirees have wondered, ‘What’s the point?’ and have never applied for Social Security benefits. Nothing could be further from the truth. The WEP and GPO are not statutory provisions that prohibit public sector retirees from any Social Security benefits. If you have sufficient earnings to qualify for Social Security benefits you are entitled to some level of benefits. The WEP and GPO reduce those benefits based on a formula, up to a maximum of \$558 in 2023, and for the GPO, this also offsets the Social Security survivor benefit by two-thirds of the state pension benefit.

In 90 percent of the cases where the GPO applies, it wipes out the Social Security survivor benefit, leaving the survivor with nothing. But I have counseled a number of retirees who, thinking WEP and GPO are a prohibition, have not applied for Social Security benefits at all. While having the benefits substantially reduced is infuriating, you are eligible for some level of benefit for which you must apply.

If you have not applied for Social Security, and have sufficient quarters to be eligible, please complete the application. You will receive less than you should, but until the WEP and GPO are repealed, collect what you can. You’ve earned it and more. ■

REPORT FROM THE BOARD *CONTINUED*

eliminating meat and dairy offerings at hotels. Supporting legislation and broader policy-based approaches were also mentioned.

Curriculum: The board voted to issue a public statement condemning Florida Governor Ron DeSantis for his opposition to AP African American Studies. I voted for this.

Child Care: A motion passed to provide a \$100 stipend to Annual Meeting delegates who require child care. I voted in favor.

Summer Conference: This is scheduled to run from August 6 through August 9, 2023, in Amherst.

Reproductive Rights: Kelly Henderson, a member of the MTA Task Force on Reproductive Rights, asked for an extension of its original one-year mission, saying that it has

been difficult to get people together and that they would like to take a longer view. They intend to create a pamphlet for our members and encourage the use of bargaining to expand access to reproductive care.

In Other News:

Amy Morin, a Lexington Education Association member, was elected as the At-Large Director to represent Educational Support Professionals.

As a guest speaker, Framingham Teachers Association President Christine Mulrone advocated that all MTA materials be available in English, Spanish and Portuguese, or in whatever language members feel most comfortable receiving information.

Good health to you. Stay safe and let’s root for spring! ■

MARCH 21, 2023, A DAY OF ACTION FOR CLIMATE

Seth Evans

For months now, Third Act and other climate organizations have been urging their members and the public in general to use their financial power as depositors, borrowers, and credit card holders to pressure four major U.S. banks – Chase, Bank of America, Citibank, and Wells Fargo – to stop funding the fossil fuel industry. The purpose of the Bank On Our Future campaign is to slow or halt the financing of new fossil fuel infrastructure projects and hasten the transition to the green energy future. Remarkably, for those holding more than \$62,000 in one of these banks, moving the money to a bank “clean” of fossil fuel support offsets a typical American’s carbon footprint for six months!

The campaign efforts will coalesce around the 3.21.23 Day of Action, which will include events in the Boston area, and throughout the state and country.

Third Act and supporting groups have asked these banks to meet with us to discuss their plans to end their financial support of the fossil fuel industry. Communications with the banks and their staff and leadership are ongoing.

To increase the pressure on the big banks, Third Act, ECA, and other partners are asking people to sign the Banking On Our Future pledge at thirdact.org/act/bank-on-our-future-pledge/.

It states: “If Chase, Citibank, Wells Fargo and Bank of

America are still funding the exploration, expansion, and development of climate-destroying fossil fuel projects in March 2023, I pledge to close my account and cut up my credit card. If I don’t bank at these institutions now, I pledge I won’t do so in the future.”

If you have not yet signed the pledge, please do so now!

Third Act and its partners have many resources to help people get started on finding better banks, credit unions, and credit cards.

On the Day of Action, we hope that many of us will be ready to show up at one (or more!) of the bank branches and cut up a credit card from one of the four banks. Even if you do not yet have a new credit card, or are not banking with any of the four, you are welcome to join the Day of Action! You can symbolically cut up a cardboard credit card.

Actions are planned in Boston on Tuesday, March 21, from noon to 1:30 p.m., at Downtown Crossing. The location is 425 Washington St., at the intersection with Winter Street. Actions are also planned in Lexington, and at the bank branches in other towns.

For details and more information about how to participate from home, visit bankonourfuture.org. ■



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For further information, please contact Print Shop Coordinator Bobby McNeil
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