



HETTY ROSENSTEIN
NJ Area Director

August 18, 2016

Important Update on the Constitutional Amendment

As you probably know by now, the Constitutional Amendment will not be on the ballot in November 2016. This is because Senate President Sweeney tied the posting of the Constitutional Amendment to the passage of a Transportation Trust Fund bill. At the eleventh hour, when he was unable to pass a TTF that would withstand the Governor's veto (at least 27 votes) he refused to pass the Constitutional Amendment by August 8, 2016, the deadline for it to be on the 2016 ballot. **This does not necessarily doom the Constitutional Amendment. If the bill is posted by the end of the session in January, it will be on the ballot in November 2017.**

This also does not doom our pension fund. The State's payment for FY2016 was paid in June 2016 and was not reduced from what was passed in the budget. As long as the Fiscal Year 2017 payment is made to the pension fund within this current fiscal year, the delay of the Constitutional Amendment will have minimal impact on the pension, because the pension payment approved in this year's budget is equal to the amount proposed in the Amendment for 2017.

There are definitely potential problems with delaying the pension vote until 2017. We believed 2016 was a better year for this campaign based on polling, the presidential election, and both state and national politics. We have made a considerable effort all year to get this issue on the ballot in 2016 and to win statewide voter approval. We are deeply disappointed and angry that the Amendment was not passed this year, but this does not stop our fight. We are reviewing our polling and determining if we need further information, but if 2017 is at all a realistic time to pass the Amendment, we will work to get it passed in 2017, even though it may be more challenging.

We are putting together a plan to engage every single Democratic State Senator. While many Democratic Senators spoke up for the Constitutional Amendment, some left the pension and TTF negotiations up to leadership. Every Legislator bears responsibility for resolving these difficult issues for the long term health of the State – we will not let them merely be passive and

blame others for lack of action. We will be meeting with State Senators in as many districts as possible between now and the end of the session, and we will be asking members to attend those meetings.

What about the Dues Assessment for State Executive and Judicial Branch Members?

As you know, we conducted a referendum of our membership to raise dues in order to repay a loan that would pay for this campaign and to protect our collective bargaining rights. We planned on a multi-million dollar campaign and a 5-year assessment to support it. We drew down a small part of that loan to pay for polling, phone banks and door knocking in March, April and May, and training shop stewards on the issue. The largest campaign costs are for media and professional consulting, campaign management and canvassing. Based on the delay in getting the pension amendment on the 2016 ballot, we are suspending the dues assessment immediately. Such changes take 30 days to implement so it should take effect the first pay period in October. Once we know our Constitutional Amendment is on the ballot, **we will restart the dues increase within 30 days.**

What are we going to do about Steve Sweeney? Other Unions are going after him— are we?

Steve Sweeney is probably running for Governor as are other individuals. Without question, the role that Sweeney played in failing to put the Constitutional Amendment will be a consideration for the Local Leaders as they go through our endorsement process next year. But we have incredibly important work to do in the next several months— electing a U.S. President, fighting hard to get the Pension Amendment passed and on the ballot, continuing to deal with bargaining our next contracts, and fighting our everyday workplace issues. We must focus on what is right in front of us now. It is critical that stewards and members come out for worksite meetings and tune in to town hall calls during this time. We stick together when times are tough. Winning these tough issues is never easy and may not happen on the expected schedule, but our fight is always stronger when we fight together.

Our next Town Hall call will be **September 7, 2016 at 7 p.m.** If you are signed up for Town Hall calls and you have received them in the past, just pick up the phone on September 7 when we call you. If you are not signed up for Town Hall calls, you can sign up here: <http://cwanj.org/signup>.

In Solidarity,

Hetty Rosenstein,
CWA NJ Area Director

Josezetta Hill, President
Local 1071

Karl Walko, President
Local 1014

Ken Tauro, President
Local 1075

John Rose, President
Local 1031

Bennie Brantley, President
Local 1077

Patrick Kavanagh, President
Local 1032

Jeffrey Miletta, President
Local 1078

Gaye Palmer, President
Local 1033

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Local 1079

Adam Liebtag, President
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Renee Wilder, President
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Shawn Ludwig, President
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