

RISE Delaware Update for 2-23-23

27 former State Legislators Sign Open Letter to Governor about retiree health care benefits

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Former legislators write “Open Letter” to the governor and legislators regarding retirees’ healthcare coverage

Twenty-seven former State senators and representatives sent an “Open Letter” to Gov. John Carney and legislators today opposing the State’s plans to privatize retirees’ Medicare coverage by switching to a Medicare Advantage plan. The letter reminds State officials that under Delaware law, they are required to select the “best plan” that satisfies the interests of the State and its pensioners.

The letter states that Medicare Advantage is not the “best plan” to satisfy the interests of Delaware’s pensioners and lists the reasons why. They also cite the State’s own consultant who found that changes to eligibility for retirement healthcare benefits would have a far greater impact (on the State’s unfunded liability) than privatizing traditional Medicare.

The letter closes by saying, “Even in the worst of times, we kept our promises to our retirees and made sure that their excellent healthcare benefits were secure. Now it is your turn to do the same for those who went before you.”

[Full text of letter follows]

An Open Letter to Gov. John Carney and Members of the Legislature

From Former Legislators

Dear Gov. Carney and Legislators:

We, the undersigned former legislators, are writing to express our deepest concerns about the State’s efforts to privatize Medicare for 30,000 retirees and dependents. Many of us will also be affected by this monumental change to the benefits that the State has provided its retirees for decades.

We are particularly concerned, given the findings of your own consultants, that privatizing retirees’ benefits by switching to Medicare Advantage will have much less impact on the unfunded liability in the State’s healthcare fund than other changes. They found that changes to

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eligibility for retirement healthcare benefits would have a far greater impact than privatizing traditional Medicare. After all, retiree Medicare benefits are 80% funded by the federal government.

The unfunded liability of the State's healthcare fund should not be the only consideration in your decision-making. The law requires that you select the "best plan" that satisfies the interests of the State and its pensioners. Forcing retirees into a plan that:

- delays and denies medically-necessary care ordered by their doctors;
- requires that retirees request pre-authorization for 2,030 procedures and medications;
- charges deductibles, co-pays, co-insurance, and "cost-sharing" fees;
- forces retirees to use "in-network" doctors instead of their own; and
- prevents retirees from getting treatment at specialty hospitals that do not accept Medicare Advantage; is not the "best plan" to satisfy the interests of Delaware's pensioners. Even in the worst of times, we kept our promises to our retirees and made sure that their excellent healthcare benefits were secure. Now it is your turn to do the same for those who went before you.

Respectfully yours,

Sen. Myrna Bair
Rep. Nancy Wagner
Rep. Nicholas Manolakos
Sen. Patricia Blevins
Rep. Michael Barbieri
Rep. Joseph Miro
Sen. George Bunting
Rep. Donald Blakey
Rep. Michael Mulrooney
Sen. Catherine Cloutier
Rep. David Ennis
Rep. Shirley Price
Sen. Margaret Rose Henry
Rep. Harvey Kenton
Rep. Bruce Reynolds
Sen. Harris McDowell
Rep. John Kowalko
Rep. Roger Roy
Sen. Karen Peterson
Rep. Vincent Lofink
Rep. Terry Spence
Sen. Bruce Ennis
Rep. Stephanie Ulbrich
Rep. Robert Valihura
Sen. Liane Sorenson
Rep. Dennis E. Williams
Rep. Pamela Thornburg

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RISE Delaware: Retirees Investing in Social Equity Delaware

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<https://www.gofundme.com/f/rise-delaware-round-2-legal-and-other-costs>

Checks may be made payable to RISE Delaware, address below.

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