

Friends,

Rep. Paul Baumbach announced today that he will not be running for re-election. Sad news for us given how dedicated, thoughtful, tireless and helpful he has been for State Retirees. But he has served as a strong leader in the House for 12 years, which is a long and grueling time in the political arena of the General Assembly. We hope he will still work with us in his capacity as a citizen to help the cause! And we will want to continue to make sure over time that all our legislators are informed about the issues affecting State Retiree healthcare benefits and that they understand we expect them to be fully supportive.

Thank you Rep. Baumbach for your leadership on State Retiree Healthcare benefits and for all that you have done!

STATUS OF HB 330, 375, 376 AND 377

Preliminarily, we should note that we do not expect Rep. Baumbach's retirement to affect the legislative effort. He has been working unbelievably hard to successfully complete the RHBAS legislative agenda this term.

On June 12, leadership from RISE Delaware (Elisa Diller, Karen Peterson, Mary Graham and Robert Hall) and from the Delaware Retired School Personnel Association (DRSPA) (Rebecca Scarborough) attended in person the hearing before the House Administration Committee to support the four bills which, as we previously described, carry out the RHBAS recommendations for better funding of the State Retiree Medicare Supplement benefit along with certain cost cutting: HB 330, HB 375, HB 376, and HB 377.

We support these bills because putting the Medicare Supplement benefit on sounder financial footing will better ward off future efforts, sneaky or otherwise, to offload Retirees to Medicare (Dis)Advantage (or some other equally bad plan the insurance industry concocts), which reaps a big financial benefit for the State at the expense of Retirees.

Senator Karen Peterson (ret.) spoke on behalf of RISE in favor of all four bills: "We are grateful to Rep. Paul Baumbach for following through on the recommendations of the RHBAS. Most studies and recommendations in government end up on a shelf to collect dust. But Rep. Baumbach took the recommendations and converted them into legislation that will codify the work of the RHBAS to protect our healthcare benefits and provide for funding."

Rebecca Scarborough spoke on behalf of the DRSPA noting that the "passage [of HB 330] would demonstrate the State's commitment to address the sustainability of retiree healthcare costs by pre-funding current and future State retiree health insurance as outlined by RHBAS' recommendations." She commented on how the three cost savings bills will also help protect State Retirees from the threat to our Medicare Supplement benefit that the State's unfunded OPEB liability has created.

We were happy to hear **Steve LePage** speak from the ether in support of the bills and pointing out that underfunding of the Medicare Supplement benefit has been a problem long in the making. So, this package of bills is long overdue.

Where the bills stand:

The bills passed out of the House Administration committee yesterday and were put on the consent agenda for the full House today. They have now gone from the House to the Senate Executive Committee. Given that there does not seem to be any opposition, hopefully they will go through seamlessly next week.

HB 330, which calls for increased funding in the State budget, has gone to the House Appropriations Committee where it will need to be acted upon before it can go before the whole House and then the Senate. So we will have to wait and see what happens in that committee, but we are hopeful.

Regards,

Mary Graham

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RISE Delaware: Retirees Investing in Social Equity Delaware

Elisa Diller, President

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