



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

A. EOC RETIREES: At the Chapter's Executive Committee meeting on May 7, in response to requests from EOC retirees that continued attention be paid to an inequitable situation regarding non-reimbursement for Medicare "Part B" from NYC, the Committee adopted the following resolution which was then transmitted to the PSC leadership.

WHEREAS, Current staff members of the EOC, upon retirement with coverage under Medicare, will receive all benefits provided to all other full-time CUNY staff covered under the PSC contract, and

WHEREAS, A group of EOC retirees have been excluded from equal benefits, e.g. by not being reimbursed for Medicare's "Part B" premiums, and who do not have spouses or registered partners receiving Welfare Fund benefits, and

WHEREAS, A group of EOC retirees are not accorded equal rights and benefits offered to other CUNY faculty and staff who are included under PSC contracts,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Executive Committee of the Retirees Chapter urge the PSC and the CUNY administration to jointly press the City of New York to redress these long-standing inequities confronting a group of EOC retirees.

B. NEW BY-LAWS: Following the adoption of the proposed new By-Laws, by a two-thirds majority vote at Chapter meetings held on April 9 and May 7, the By-Laws have been sent to the PSC for the necessary subsequent steps in the process of acceptance before they may be put into effect.

C. ROSEMARY MARKOWSKI AND TIAA-CREF: We had alerted members to the possibility of their having the opportunity of to speak directly with Rosemary Markowski on the afternoon of May 7 for the purpose of clearing up still existing problems related to TIAA-CREF accounts. It is sad to report that she did not appear at our meeting. Efforts to reach her were fruitless. We understand that she has been moved to a different office within TIAA. When a replacement is named, we will notify our members.

D. CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS: At the last session, held on May 4, one item relating to retirees was placed on the table. It stated:

ASSEMBLY (NYSUT-RA), APRIL 26-28: Retiree members of the Chapter served on a number of the RA committees concerned with issues related to pensions, Medicare, Social Security, and protection of benefits into retirement. Major portions of the Assembly sessions were devoted to No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and the participants heard from Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, and Governor Eliot Spitzer. It was especially pleasing to the Retirees Chapter to have Francine Brewer, a member of the Executive Committee, named as a recipient of a Community Service Award. Among the items brought before the delegates by the PSC were concerns regarding the continued U.S. warfare in Iraq, the plight of the teachers in Oaxaca, Mexico and, closer to home, bulk buying of prescription drugs for Medicaid recipients, and opposition to the imposition of increased premiums for Medicare "Part B" based on income.

H. OPTIONAL RETIREMENT PLANS: Retiree lobbyists actively pursued the interests of both actives and retirees who are in ORP plans. The lobbying effort was concentrated on having the state legislature modify the requirement that actives must continue paying 3% of their annual salary into their ORP beyond ten years in service.

RETIREEES CAUCUS: Members of the Retirees Caucus wish to thank you for your vote of confidence in the recent chapter election. At the June 11 meeting, those who are to serve on the Executive Committee of this

Chapter will be introduced to the attendees.

JUNE LUNCHEON: It is not too late to send in your reservations. Call the PSC directly at 212-354-1252 if you wish to pay at the door. Hope to see you all at the Luncheon.

COPE: CUNY retirees are well aware of the constant need to lobby the various governmental bodies in order to maintain all benefits into retirement. We have always responded generously to the appeal for funds to support COPE activities. In the brief span of time since you received the request for contributions, you have already submitted well over \$2,000. Let's keep the checks rolling in.

THE LARRY KAPLAN REPORT: This month's report is on the important topic: **Affordable Housing for Older Americans: A Quiet Crisis in America.**

Over 7 million older households in the U.S. are finding it difficult to pay for housing or are living in substandard dwellings, according to a 2002 Report to Congress by the Commission on Affordable Housing. The Report indicates that by 2030, with the aging of the baby boomers, the projected number of older households with a housing problem will rise to 11.3 million.

The generally accepted definition of affordability for housing is for a household to pay no more than 30% of annual income for rent. According to an Urban Institute study of January 2005, unmarried adults 65-

and-over, three-quarters of whom are women, spend about 39% of their income on housing. As a result, these households are forced to curtail their spending for food, clothing, transportation and other normal budget items.

Federal Housing Programs for Seniors: The Federal government has several programs that seek to provide housing for low and moderate-income households.

Section 8 is a rental assistance program which enables low-income people to pay fair market rents. The program provides subsidies to low-income people so that they pay for rent only what they can afford. The payments go directly to landlords, or are given to the low-income individuals or families in the form of rental vouchers.

Other sections of the Federal housing laws insure private mortgage loans to for-profit and non-profit owners to encourage the construction or rehabilitation of multifamily rental or cooperative housing.

The section on Supportive Housing for the Elderly provides funds to non-profit organizations to develop affordable rental housing exclusively for very low-income elderly households.

Finally, a Public Housing Program provides affordable rental housing for low-income families, including the elderly and disabled, through 3,000 public housing authorities

nationwide, including the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA).

The problem with all the Federal Housing Programs for Seniors is inadequate funding. It is hoped that the 110th Congress will make affordable housing a national priority and provide the necessary financial support.

In the meantime, states and localities have developed a wide range of programs to support the affordable housing effort. For example, in New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and the Housing Development Corporation (HDC) support the goal of building sufficient affordable housing for the City's residents. HDC issues bonds to finance the construction or preservation of existing housing. This agency functions like a private mortgage bank. Its operations are self-financing and it does not use any tax levy dollars. In 2006, HDC provided \$1.8 billion to finance the construction or preservation of more than 9,000 affordable apartments.

Mayor Bloomberg's affordable housing program began in July 2003 as a 65,000-unit plan and was expanded in February 2006 to 165,000 units. The Mayor's program is a 10-year effort, costing \$7.5 billion. As of March 2007, City officials said that 55,000 units, one-third of the goal, have been financed. Of these, 41,366 have been completed, available for occupancy.

The New York City Housing Authority operated 345 public

housing developments, with 2,694 residential buildings, containing 181,856 apartments for approximately 420,000 residents. Average annual family income for residents in New York City's public housing is \$18,334. Average monthly rent is \$311, or \$3,732 per year, about 20% of average annual income. The waiting list for public housing in New York City consists of 142,000 families, and the Section 8 program, 123,126 families.

Public policy should support the goal of constructing low and moderate-cost housing to reduce the problem of homelessness. New York City is fortunate in having local and state leaders as well as a Democratic Congress in Washington who support this goal and who have the power to spark an affordable housing initiative.