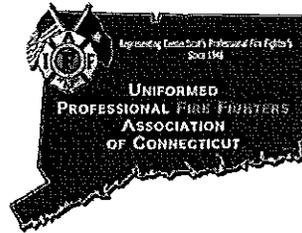


UNIFORMED PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT
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PAUL J. RAPANAULT
DIRECTOR
Legislative/Political Affairs

Thursday February 27, 2014

Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Tercyak and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is Paul Rapanault. I am the Director of Legislation/Political Affairs of the Uniformed Professional Fire Fighters of Connecticut. The UPFFA represents 4,000 career fire fighters, Emergency Medical Technicians and dispatchers in nearly 60 municipal and state local unions.

I am here today to speak on two bills before you.

We **OPPOSE** Proposed S.B. No. 219 AN ACT CONCERNING THE MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT SYSTEM CONTRIBUTION RATE. Municipal employers have in the past enjoyed contribution rates much lower than today's. At one point in time, the contribution rate was less than their employees.

There was no effort to lower the employee's rate to that of the municipality at that time. Additionally, municipalities participating in the Municipal Employees Retirement System have made the conscious and responsible choice of properly funding their pension obligations. The cost of adequately funding their pension promises result in no long term pension liabilities that add to the annual budget outlays of the municipality.

The contribution to MERS is the only pension liability of the municipality and over the long term has been an affordable and effective way of providing retirement security to workers while helping to control costs and long term debt for the municipalities. This increase is not necessary or fair.

We **SUPPORT** S.B. No. 220 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE INCLUSION OF LABOR HISTORY IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL CURRICULUM. The labor movement has been driving force behind the creation of the middle class in the United States and around the world. Many of the accomplishments achieved by the labor movement are commonplace today, such as an 8-hour work day & 40-hour work week, a minimum wage, child labor laws, safer working conditions, unemployment insurance, protection against workplace discrimination, Workers' Compensation and collective bargaining to give workers a voice in the workplace.

Walter M. O'Connor, *President Emeritus*
Santo J. Alleano, Jr., *Vice President Emeritus*

Raymond D. Shea, *President Emeritus*
Patrick J. Shevlin, *Treasurer Emeritus*

This history is an important part of the story of the United States of America. Students deserve to know how the protections afforded today's workers were achieved. The hard fought battles over many years with the great personal sacrifices of ordinary people deserves to be a part of this nation's history to be shared with future generations.

Respectfully,



Paul J. Rapanault
DIRECTOR
Legislative/Political Affairs

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