

Ranking Minority Member:

Children and Families

Consumer Protection

Domestic Animal Welfare

Committees:

Alcoholism and Substance Abuse

Banks

Social Services

**THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK**



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March 24, 2020

Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor
New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

As we work together to defeat the coronavirus, many New Yorkers are not only worried about their own health and that of their loved ones, but also their economic futures. During the past few days, your administration has written to thousands of former and retired health care and hospital workers across our state, including many of the 1,100 retirees of the former St. Clare's Hospital in my district in Schenectady, in the worthy and important goal of enlisting their help to treat those who are most at ill from the COVID-19 coronavirus.

These 1,100 New Yorkers, who cared for some of the most vulnerable, have been coping with economic uncertainty and desperation for over a year with no end in sight as their pensions evaporated in the snap of a finger through no fault of their own.

It's ironic that many of our St. Clare's retirees are now being asked to suit-up and join the fight one more time, when in many cases, they were on the verge of losing everything before this current national crisis occurred. I know you have a tremendous amount on your plate, but as we wait for the Attorney General to take action and the Court to weigh in, I respectfully ask you to use your executive authority to provide a measure of relief for our dedicated St. Clare's retirees so they can better weather this financial storm.

During this period, I respectfully ask you to consider the following ideas, to help these 1,100 caring people weather the storm:

- Double the STAR property tax relief credit;
- Freeze mortgage payments and tax credit for rent for St. Clare's pensioners during the crisis;
- Retired Healthcare Staff COVID-19 Volunteer Tax Credit;
- Allow St. Clare's pensioners who own a business to keep their sales tax revenue;
- Reduce eligibility requirements for the EPIC pharmacy assistance program;
- Lower premiums for retirees to defray the costs of home health aides;



- Tax credit for the cost of groceries, medical supplies and cleaning products;
- Waive tele-health co-pays;
- Exempt pensioners from the NYSERDA Thermostat Rebate Program \$75 new energy efficient thermostat cost;
- Waive all DMV fees for one year; and
- Waive OGS contracting fees with the state for pensioners.


This is not an exhaustive list but a few suggestions to help mitigate some of the economic pain felt by 1,100 of our shared constituents who have been hurt by losing some or all of their pensions and now with the impact of the coronavirus.

I'm sure that despite their recent personal financial difficulties, many of these 1,100 retired health care workers would like nothing more than to lend a helping hand to their fellow New Yorkers in this great time of need. I hope you can take a look at their situation and use your power to help them as well.

My prayers to you, your wonderful family and staff for good health in this difficult time in our state and nation's history.

Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,



James N. Tedisco
49th Senate District