Federal Funding for State Positions
The Public Employees Federation urges New York State Federal representatives to ensure that New York State applies for all federal funding to which it is entitled in order to support the professional workforce and the services they provide.

PEF opposes the transfer of funding from state agencies to private contractors or so-called “shadow” government agencies, and also opposes the federal funding of any not-for-profit or other entities, including academic and research foundations providing services or programs currently or previously performed by public agencies and employees. PEF is in favor of mandating that a cost benefit analysis be completed before public agency jobs and services are allowed to be contracted out. PEF is also in favor of public highway construction projects being inspected by engineers and technicians employed by the same agencies paying for the projects.

PEF supports legislation to fully fund the Highway Trust Fund to insure timely inspection, regular maintenance and reconstruction of the Nation's transportation infrastructure.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity ACT (WIOA)
On July 22nd, 2014, the President signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) into law.

PEF worked hard to secure the following language for the safety of our members:

- WIOA maintains the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Services as a distinct program, does not undermine Civil Service/merit staffing regulations and includes funding for development opportunities/training for employment staff services.
- WIOA secures dedicated workforce and labor union slots on workforce boards and makes efforts to support state vocational rehabilitation services that are essential to opening doors to employment for people with disabilities.
- WIOA does not move the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) from the Department of Education to the Department of Labor.
- WIOA includes specific authorization levels from 2015 to 2020. These levels result in a 17% increase in FY 2020 over the FY 2014 funding level. These funding levels are guidelines for the Congressional appropriators to use when they make yearly funding decisions. PEF will continue to advocate for these increased funding levels.
Transportation Funding
The House and Senate have started talks on versions of bills that would continue to provide spending and create policy for surface transportation programs.

PEF supports increased transportation funding, increased accountability of private contractors and legislation that would require public-funded infrastructure construction projects be managed and inspected by public employees and require agencies to do a cost/benefit analysis before contracting out services with private sector vendors.

PEF also supports efforts to increase federal funding for mass transit, ride-sharing programs, and other measures to reduce traffic congestion, conserve precious fossil fuel resources, and create a sustainable transportation system.

PEF opposes privatization of services provided by public employees.

Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)
On January 4th, 2011, the President signed the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) into law. It aims to ensure the U.S. food supply is safe by shifting the focus from responding to preventing contamination. The FSMA gives the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) new authority to regulate the way foods are grown, harvested and processed.

PEF supports full funding of the FSMA to ensure compliance and full staffing requirements at the state level.

PEF opposes the practice of privately hired third party inspections and audits to determine compliance with Federal regulations. Companies contracted by food processing establishments to conduct such inspections compromise the integrity of the inspection process and can impact the safety of the food product which will lead to products that can harm citizens of NY State. This process of paying for inspections also puts smaller foods processing establishments at a competitive disadvantage due to the need to pay for inspections and audits that were free and previously conducted by state inspectors.

Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)
It is imperative that state employees enjoy the benefits promised by the Fair Labor Standards Act. When these benefits are denied, it should be permissible to seek legal redress in federal court.

Hatch Act
Reform of the Federal Hatch Act to allow state employees the unfettered opportunity to participate in political activity of their choosing, which is a constitutional right, is simply a matter of fairness.

Social Security Privatization
Members of Congress have proposed allowing younger workers to redirect a portion of their Social Security payroll taxes into individual private investment accounts. This is the first step toward privatizing Social Security, which will cost an estimated $1 trillion in transition costs.

PEF is opposed to privatization of Social Security which could lower benefits, increase retirement age and eliminate the disability benefit.

PEF supports raising the Social Security tax cap in order to provide sufficient funding to maintain benefit levels equivalent to current levels for future Social Security recipients.
Disability Determination Process
The Social Security Administration has proposed reforms to the disability determination process that would create longer delays and slow the determination process down.

PEF opposes the following changes:
- Establishing a Quick Step Decisions Process;
- Establishing Regional Areas of Expertise;
- Adding additional Medical Personnel as part of the determination teams;
- Creating a Federal Reviewing Official Position;
- Moving Medical Consultants into regional expert review units; and
- Requiring Medical Consultants to obtain board certification

Federal Unemployment Tax ACT (FUTA)
FUTA authorizes the Internal Revenue Service to collect a federal employer tax used to fund state workforce agencies. FUTA covers the costs of administering the UI and Job Service programs in all states. In addition, FUTA pays one-half of the cost of extended unemployment benefits (during periods of high unemployment) and provides for a fund from which states may borrow, if necessary, to pay benefits.

Repeal of FUTA has been proposed in prior years and may be proposed again. If this tax is repealed, New York State would have to make up the difference by raising taxes and or cutting benefits.

PEF opposes repeal of FUTA.

Block Grants
PEF is opposed to proposals that consolidate government programs into block grant funding streams that impact the New York State workforce and the services they provide to the residents of New York State.

National Health Care Insurance
PEF supports the expansion of Medicare described in Bill HR676 – The United States National Health Insurance Act. This legislation would provide not for profit, single payer health care to all Americans.

PEF supports the following health care reform principles:
- Affordability- health care costs must be brought under control.
- Choice- every American should have the freedom to choose their health care provider, including a health care public option.
- Improving quality- reform should include provisions to improve the quality of health care in America, with a strong public health focus.
- All Americans must have quality health care.

PEF opposes taxing employer-provided health benefits.
National Labor Relations Act
PEF is opposed to actions by the National Labor Relations Board in the reclassifying of charge nurses as “supervisors”, making them ineligible for union representation.

Medicaid
The outcome of reducing funding to Medicaid programs not only can lead to decreases in health care for low-income elderly individuals, people with disabilities, and parents and children, but will deteriorate the fiscal conditions of New York and other states.

PEF supports improved funding of Medicaid and opposes cuts to the program.

Medicare Privatization
PEF is opposed to the privatization of Medicare which would reduce benefits and increase out of pocket expenses.

Medicare Prescription Drugs
The costs of prescription drugs could be lowered if Congress authorized the Medicare plan to negotiate with manufacturers the price of the drugs used in the plan.

PEF supports proposals that would lower the costs of prescription drugs.

Medicare Reimbursement
PEF opposes attempts by the federal government to reduce Medicare reimbursement to rehabilitation hospitals such as Helen Hayes Hospital. These hospitals provide an essential public service.

Safe Nursing and Patient Care
PEF supports legislation that would prohibit health care facilities from requiring a Registered Nurse (RN) or Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) to work mandatory overtime hours.

PEF opposes the use of mandatory overtime as a staffing tool.

PEF also supports legislation that establishes a federal safe patient handling standard to prevent injuries to RNs’ and other health care providers by requiring the elimination of manual lifting of patients through the use of mechanical devices.

Flexible Spending Accounts
PEF supports amending the Federal Tax Code to allow retirees to participate in a pretax healthcare flexible spending account and to allow rollover of unused funds.

PEF supports amending the Federal Tax Code so the dependent care tax exemption is more inline with actual child care costs and tied to inflation in the year the exemption was deducted on the federal tax form.

PEF also supports amending the Federal Tax Code so that all prescription drugs, regardless of country of origin, and over the counter vitamins and supplements, qualify as reimbursable medical expenses in the pretax health care flexible spending account law.
Pensions and Annuity Income Exclusion
PEF supports amending the Federal Tax Code to allow all pension and annuity income exclusion per tax year for senior citizens or retirees once they reach the age of 59 ½ years old.

PEF also supports legislation that will make defined benefit retirement plans more economically feasible for companies to adopt and continue to adequately fund and support.

Veterans' Benefits
PEF supports legislation that would increase federal funding for Veterans’ Administration medical centers, military hospitals, rehabilitation centers, housing and outreach programs.

PEF also supports increased disability and death benefits for veterans and increased death benefits for dependents of active duty military personnel including the National Guard, the Reserves and New York State Guard.

PEF opposes further cuts to other areas of the Veterans’ Administration budget.

Pay Equity for State Employees
PEF supports legislation that would make it a policy of Congress that the total compensation of state and local employees in agencies receiving Federal funds be based on the principles that:

1. There be equal pay for substantially equal work done by public employees and private contractors those agencies have contracted with; and

2. The pay and per diem rates of State and local government employees should be no less than the prevailing wage for similar or substantially similar work done within the State or locality.

Trade Agreements
PEF supports trade that improves working conditions, lifts wages and living standards, and creates job growth in the United States. American workers should face fair competition in the workplace. PEF will oppose any trade agreement where labor and environmental standards are NOT enforced in the same manner as commercial obligations, or that undermines important domestic laws and regulations, promotes privatization of essential public services, such as healthcare, education, transportation, and perpetuates offshore production.

PEF supports efforts to improve global competitiveness of workers and firms based in the United States by substantially transforming, expanding and fully funding Trade Adjustment Assistance Programs in order to assist our nation’s manufacturing, services and technology workers affected by technology and trade trends; master this century’s employment challenges; and invest in innovative research, education and technology initiatives to foster commercialization into the industries and jobs of the future.

PEF opposes any and all foreign trade agreements that negatively impact the unionized and non-unionized workforce in the United States of America.
Environmental Protection
The federal government has rolled back safeguards that protect our drinking water, air quality, public lands and public health. Current environmental policies and deep budget cuts have resulted in the federal government providing fewer dollars to state governments for important state environmental and environmental infrastructure programs. PEF opposes political interference with scientific reports produced by employees of federal agencies.

PEF supports full federal funding of environmental programs in New York State and opposes the diminishing of existing environmental laws and regulations.

Homeland Security
PEF supports the proportionate distribution of Homeland Security funds based primarily upon an assessment of risk.

PEF is opposed to the Federal Government preventing employees of the Department of Homeland Security from joining a union.

Employee Free Choice Act
PEF supports the Employee Free Choice Act to allow workers to exercise their right to unionize without unfair intimidation by their employers.

Immigration Reform
PEF supports comprehensive immigration reform that provides a pathway for earned legalization for current undocumented immigrants.

Federal Stimulus Dollars Spent on New York State Projects
PEF supports the use of federal stimulus dollars that are spent on projects in New York State go to businesses within New York State and those that use union labor when possible.

Maximizing Voter Participation
PEF supports legislation that would direct Congress to enact a new coverage formula, similar to section (4b) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which was excluded by the Supreme Court.
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