Legislative – FEDERAL

PEF supports legislation that will protect the jobs of PEF members and the vital services our members provide to New York State residents and opposes federal budget proposals or legislation that adversely impact state and local governments. PEF continues to lobby members of the New York State Congressional delegation to ensure that New York State applies for all federal funding to which it is entitled to in order to support our professional workforce.

PEF strongly supports the use of state employees for all federally funded positions. PEF is also in favor of mandating that a cost/benefit analysis be completed before public agency jobs and services are considered for contracting out. PEF supports increased transportation funding and accountability of private contractors, and legislation that requires that publicly funded infrastructure construction projects be managed and inspected by public employees.

PEF strongly opposes cuts to domestic programs and will continue to aggressively lobby to secure funding for Medicaid, Social Security, education, disability determination services, housing, transportation fair labor standards, veterans’ benefits, pay equity for state employees, immigration reform, the investment of infrastructure, education, job creation, affordable healthcare, safe nursing and patient care standards, mental health services, Medicare protection for seniors and those with disabilities, and other federal programs that impact our members.

PEF opposes the privatization and outsourcing of state services that transfer federal funding from state agencies to private contractors. PEF also opposes federal funding for services provided by not-for-profit organizations, academic research centers, or other entities that replace the valuable services provided by public employees.

FEDERAL BUDGET

Federal funds make up approximately one-third of New York State’s budget, or roughly $61.6 Billion of New York State’s FY 2019 $177 Billion all funds budget. Some of the highlights include $41.9 Billion for Medicaid; $12.5 Billion for other health and human services programs; $4.1 Billion for education; $1.6 Billion for transportation; $1.1 Billion for public protection and $.4 Billion for all other funding.

On December 22, 2018, the longest government shutdown (35 days) began. Short-term funding measures were approved on January 25. Funding for the remainder of the fiscal year, through September 30, was approved on February 15. In early August, Congress and the President agreed to a budget deal which suspends the debt ceiling through July 31, 2021. This deal limits the possibility of another government shutdown, but still requires individual appropriation bills
by September 30 in 2019 and 2020. The agreement also raises spending by $320 billion over the two years with $77 billion in spending offsets.

**FEDERAL LEGISLATION**

PEF continues to monitor and support legislation which would positively impact our members. Some examples of positive legislation include:

**S 546/HR 1327 Never Forget the Heroes: James Zadroga, Ray Pfeifer, and Luis Alvarez Permanent Authorization of the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund Act**
This bill fully funds and makes permanent the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund for first responders and others who suffered injury and illness related to the terror attacks and rescue and recovery efforts. It makes whole anyone who claims were reduced due to a lack of funding. **SIGNED INTO LAW—JULY 29, 2019**

**HR 1099 Safety, Efficiency and Accountability in Transportation Projects Through Public Inspection Act of 2019**
This bill, introduced by Rep. Jose Serrano (D, NY-15) at the request of PEF, requires that public employees shall perform the construction inspection functions on all design-build projects or 2-phase contracts.

**S 696/HR 1587 National Nurse Act of 2019**
This bill was re-introduced in 2019 and is co-sponsored by several members of New York’s Congressional delegation. The bill would provide outreach and education; guidance and leadership activities that will increase public safety; identify national health priorities; encourage volunteerism of nurses. PEF is supportive of legislation that strengthens the relationship between nurses and health related national organizations which allows for the expansion of services throughout the state to increase public safety.

**S 1357/HR 2581 Nurse Staffing Standards for Hospital Patient Safety and Quality Care Act of 2019**
This bill establishes direct care registered nurse-to-patient staffing ratio requirements in hospitals and requires them to implement and submit to HHS a staffing plan that complies with specified minimum nurse-to-patient ratios by unit. Hospitals must post a notice regarding nurse-to-patient ratios in each unit and maintain records of actual ratios for each shift in each unit. PEF supports
legislation that seeks to improve the safety of patients and nurses, the quality of nursing care and nursing staffing levels.

**HR 397 Rehabilitation for Multiemployer Pensions Act of 2019**
This bill makes defined benefit retirement plans more economically feasible for companies to adopt and continue to adequately fund and support. This bill establishes the Pension Rehabilitation Administration within the Department of the Treasury and a related trust fund to make loans to certain multiemployer defined benefit pension plans.

**S 851/HR 1309 Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act**
This bill requires the Department of Labor to address workplace violence in the health care and social service sectors. Specifically, Labor must promulgate an occupational safety and health standard that requires certain employers in the health care and social service sectors, as well as employers in sectors that conduct activities similar to the activities in the health care and social service sectors, to develop and implement a comprehensive plan for protecting health care workers, social service workers, and other personnel from workplace violence.

**S 1129/HR 1384 Medicare for All Act**
This bill establishes a national health insurance program that is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Among other requirements, the program must (1) cover all U.S. residents; (2) provide for automatic enrollment of individuals upon birth or residency in the United States; and (3) cover items and services that are medically necessary or appropriate to maintain health or to diagnose, treat, or rehabilitate a health condition, including hospital services, prescription drugs, mental health and substance abuse treatment, dental and vision services, and long-term care. The bill prohibits cost-sharing (e.g., deductibles, coinsurance, and copayments) and other charges for covered services. Additionally, private health insurers and employers may only offer coverage that is supplemental to, and not duplicative of, benefits provided under the program.

**S 150/HR 582 Raise the Wage Act**
This legislation would create a federal minimum wage of $15/hour within six years for most workers. It would also increase wages for tipped workers, newly hired workers under the age of 20 and individuals with disabilities.

**PASSED THE HOUSE—JULY 18, 2019**
S 1306/HR 2474/ Protecting the Right to Organize Act of 2019
This bill amends and modernizes the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) by strengthening federal laws to protect workers and close legal loopholes which deprive workers of their right to organize for better wages, benefits and working conditions. It would also establish a process for mediation and arbitration to help the parties achieve a first contract.

HR 303 Retired Pay Restoration Act
This bill would allow for the receipt of both military retired pay and veterans' disability compensation with respect to any service-connected disability. Individuals who were retired or separated from military service due to a service-connected disability shall be eligible for the full concurrent receipt of both veterans' disability compensation and either military retired pay or combat-related special pay.