

May 24, 2022

RE: Stony Brook Nurses ORP (S.8959/A.4460-A)

Dear Legislator:

As a taxpayer, a constituent and a member of the New York State Public Employees Federation, I urge you to pass legislation to correct an error impacting a number of nurses at SUNY Stony Brook Hospital (S.1889-C by Sen. Skoufis/A.4084-B by Asm. Abbate).

This bill amends the Retirement and Social Security Law to allow certain registered nurses, within the Professional, Scientific, and Technical (PS&T) bargaining unit, employed at the State University of New York (SUNY) Stony Brook Hospital, to transfer membership from the Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) to the New York State and Local Employees Retirement System (NYSLERS).

From 1996 through 1999, various employees in temporary nursing titles at SUNY were given incomplete information regarding their retirement options. These temporary employees were strongly encouraged to join ORP. It is unclear if these individuals were given the option of joining the NYSLERS. When these employees' positions were made permanent, they became members of the PS&T bargaining unit, represented by the Public Employees Federation. SUNY employees in non-faculty positions, who are members of the PS&T bargaining unit, are eligible for membership in NYSLERS exclusively. Unfortunately, the Education Law prohibits employees from transferring from the ORP to another retirement system if they have been continuously employed by SUNY.

This bill provides the aforementioned nurses with the retirement option they should have been afforded when they first became employed by SUNY. The legislation creates a window for members of the PS&T bargaining unit in the ORP hired by SUNY between 1996 and 1999 to apply for membership in NYSLERS. There should be no additional cost to the state since eligible employees are required to repay the NYSLERS both their share and the employer's share of previous service credit earned while enrolled in the ORP.

Please ensure that S.8959/A.4460-A passes during this legislative session.

Sincerely,