

TOWN OF MIDDLEBORO RETIREES INSURANCE GROUP (MRIG)
MIDDLEBORO.RETIREES.INS.GROUP@GMAIL.COM
OCTOBER 2016

STATE ELECTION

It is not the policy of your Executive Committee to endorse any particular candidate. However, your Executive Committee did send the following letter to the listed candidates for State Representative and for State Senator:

Candidate for Senator in General Court – 1st Plymouth & Bristol District

Sen. Marc Pacheco

Sandra M. Wright

Candidate for Senator in General Court – 1st Bristol & Plymouth District

Sen. Michael J. Rodrigues

Candidate for Representative in General Court – 12th Plymouth District

Rep. Thomas Calter, III

Peter J. Boncek

Candidate for Representative in General Court – 12th Bristol District

Rep. Keiko Orrall

Candidate for Representative in General Court – 2nd Plymouth District

Rep. Susan Williams Gifford

Sarah G. Hewins

The Middleboro Retirees Insurance Group represents approximately 400 retired employees of the Town of Middleborough. We advocate for retirees' insurance benefits and our goal is to keep all retirees informed of any and all changes they could expect in their health insurance now and in the future.

The Municipal Retiree Insurance Premium Moratorium was extended in the 2017 budget for another two-year period during the final hours of the 2016 legislative session by overriding Governor Baker's veto of Section 45 of the 2017 budget.

This measure was extremely important to our retirees, as without it our insurance percentage contribution could have been doubled without any input from those affected.

As you are a candidate for public office, we are looking for a written statement of your position on the following:

1. Would you SPONSOR a bill that would protect municipal and teacher retiree health insurance benefits by forbidding post-retirement increases in health insurance premium contribution percentages?
2. Would you SUPPORT a bill that would protect municipal and teacher retiree health insurance benefits by forbidding post-retirement increases in health insurance premium contribution percentages (similar to the State system regarding retiree health insurance)?

3. Would you be willing to work toward a permanent resolution of this matter with the Retired State, County and Municipal Employees Association of Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Teachers Association?
This would protect municipal retirees and retired teachers from unfair increases in local health insurance premiums.
4. Would you support legislation which would increase the amount of earnings per year retired public employees may be paid for additional public service, similar to House Bill 2310?

We will be sending out our quarterly newsletter near the end of October and will include candidate responses in that newsletter.

The following response is from Candidate for Senator in General Court – 1st Plymouth & Bristol District - Sen. Marc Pacheco

I wanted to make sure your committee received my response to the Middleboro Retirees Insurance Group questions. As I am sure your group may know I have supported all your issues in the State Senate for many years and work closely with the MA Retirees as well. The answer to all three questions is Yes ,Yes ,Yes. I have always supported MA. Retirees and if you were to check my record you will see I have voted for and have worked to improve these issues as a member of the State Senate. Andjust as important I have also voted against proposals that would undermine the MA Retiree system. If elected to the MA State Senate I will continue to support and work with the Middleboro Retirees and the Retired State, County And Municipal Employees Assoc.. All of these organizations at the State level have endorsed me including the MTA and the MA AFLCIO in part, because of my strong support for retiree issues.

The answer to Question 4 is YES! I will always try to help the Retiree.

Thank you,
Marc R Pacheco

State Senator

The following response is from Candidate for Representative in General Court – 2nd Plymouth District - Sarah G. Hewins

I do have a call into the Ethics Commission, I'm still unsure whether or not I can actually respond to this questionnaire given my status as a retired town employee and, thus, a Plymouth County Retiree

I can, however, inform you of my vote as a member of the Carver Board of Selectmen regarding the health benefits of current town employees. The Board initially wanted to raise the employees contribution to 50%--up from the current 25% contribution. I strongly advocated for keeping the percentage 25% for not only current town employees, but for the next 10 years so that employees hired this year would get their 10 years at 25%. My position was that if one were hired with a certain expectation of certain benefits, it would be not only unfair but downright wrong to then pull the safety net rug out from under those who had dedicated many years to the town as well as those who had just been hired with the same expectation. I did finally persuade those on the Board who at first wanted 50-50 to keep it 25-75 for the

next 10 years. Now only new employees hired after a certain date will come work for the town knowing that they're only getting 50-50.

The following is from Candidate for Representative in General Court – 2nd Plymouth District - Rep. Susan Williams Gifford

-
1. Probably not. There are a lot of nuances to this, and while I do support the concept of setting expectations for retirees, I am concerned about completely tying the hands of municipal and state officials, forever.
 2. If we can address my concerns outlined above, then quite possibly.
 3. Of course.
 4. I am proud to sponsor H. 2310 - and I believe my sponsorship shows my concern for, and support for, public workers leading to retirement and once they are in retirement.

Please confirm receipt of this e-mail. Thank you.

Susan Williams Gifford 508-295-5999

Due to a mix up between your editor, the post office and lack of time before printing this newsletter Senator Rodrigues was not able to respond, the following is from earlier correspondence (6/20/16) with him regarding Gov. Baker's veto of the Health Insurance Moratorium amendment.

Candidate for Senator in General Court – 1st Bristol & Plymouth District - Sen. Michael J. Rodrigues

Thank you for your email regarding budget amendment 91 Municipal Retiree Benefits. I also was happy to see this amendment adopted in the Senate Budget. As a cosponsor of amendment #91, I agree that, after working hard for many years, municipal retirees and retired teachers deserve our help in securing their benefits, and I will certainly keep your email in mind when discussing our community's budget priorities with the Conference Committee.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Rodrigues

STATE SENATOR

None of the other candidates responded to our letter. In the final hours of this legislative session Rep. Orrall, Rep. Calter and Rep. Gifford did vote in favor of the override of Gov. Baker's veto of the extension of the Health Insurance Moratorium. Senator Pacheco and Senator Rodrigues had both voted earlier to override Gov. Baker's veto.

GIS PATIENT PORTAL

At our Annual Meeting, Nola Jean Goodrich of the Treasurer's Office, suggested that those retirees who would be seeking reimbursements (Non-Medicare retirees) make use of the State GIS patient portal and print out information from there that would satisfy the Town's

requirements to obtain reimbursements. We would like to hear back from the membership to see if anyone has made use of this and how did it work for you?

**RETIRED STATE, COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES ASSOC. OF MASS
(MASS. RETIREES)**

Again we will put in a plug for Mass. Retirees. They have been the driving force behind our ability to get the Legislature to override the Governor's veto of the Municipal Retiree Insurance Premium Moratorium, without them we are certain things would not have come out in our favor. Mass. Retirees has been, and continues to be, a great source of information on upcoming and current information on health care issues and general retiree issues. Certain businesses are now offering discounts to members of Mass. Retirees. You can save the cost of membership by utilizing some of these discounts.

OTHER

The MRIG Executive Committee wants to give new retirees membership free for the first year of their retirement, if you are joining MRIG for the first time do not include a membership fee.

TOWN OF MIDDLEBORO RETIREES INSURANCE GROUP (MRIG)
MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION – 2016 - \$5.00

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/TOWN: _____

E-MAIL: _____

ZIP: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

(This information is confidential and will not be shared with any other person or organization.)

Make checks payable to: MRIG
c/o Mary Cook
130 Scadding Street
Taunton, MA 02780

New Member Check Here: _____
