

Resolutions Committee Report *Gayla LePage, Chair*

The Resolutions Committee reviewed the five proposals that were submitted by three different zones. Two of the proposals were on the 2017 Constitutional Convention. These were combined to make one resolution with both zones named. These four resolutions are recommended for consideration by the delegates at the 2016 Annual Meeting. All NYSRTA members should review these proposals and make their feelings about them known to their zone president, Resolutions chair, and delegates. A complete listing of the resolutions that have already been adopted can be found on the NYSRTA website.

Resolution D-19-1: Return Cursive Writing to the Elementary Curriculum (Western Zone)

WHEREAS, teaching of cursive writing is no longer mandated in the elementary curriculum nationwide; and

WHEREAS, today's students lack the knowledge to utilize cursive writing for expression and the application of signature; and

WHEREAS, cursive writing is like a foreign language to today's students who can neither write nor read it; and

WHEREAS, cursive writing has been taught in some districts in the third grade, but it is not reinforced afterwards; and

WHEREAS, a generation of students can only print their names instead of using cursive writing;

THEREFORE, be it RESOLVED that the NYSRTA urge the New York State Department of Education to return cursive writing to the elementary curriculum.

Reference: NYSRTA Bylaws, Article II, Objective 4

The Resolutions Committee voted "To Recommend".

Resolution E-16-1: Ethics Reform in the State Government (Western Zone)

WHEREAS, all residents of New York State deserve to live in an atmosphere where honesty, integrity, and ethical behavior on the part of the elected leaders are the norm; and

WHEREAS, there is a mounting concern that the people of New York State have justifiably lost faith in their government and elected leadership; and

WHEREAS, in the last several years nearly 30 state legislators and other state officials have been convicted of felonies, misdemeanors, or violations; and

WHEREAS, citizens and watchdog groups have identified some major problem areas such as (but not limited to) the: unrestricted amount of outside income that can be earned by public officials, need to close the LLC (Limited Liability Corporations) loophole in the campaign finance law, ability of convicted felons to retain their lucrative public pensions and lack of term limits, and length of service and powerful committee chairs; and

WHEREAS, the Governor and legislative leaders have given lip service to the need for ethics reform but have done little, if anything, to combat the culture of corruption that has been allowed to grow; and

WHEREAS, as retired educators, we should seize the opportunity to be in the forefront of those trying to restore faith, confidence, and accountability in our state government;

THEREFORE, be it RESOLVED that the President of the New York State Retired Teachers' Association (NYSRTA) contact the Governor, Assembly Speaker, Senate Majority Leader, and the Chairs of the Senate and Assembly Ethics Committees expressing our deep concern over the lack of ethical behavior that currently exists, and

Be it further RESOLVED, that the NYSRTA President strongly encourage these state leaders to immediately initiate and enact meaningful ethics reform, and

Be it further RESOLVED, that the NYSRTA President contact these state leaders on at least an annual basis, reinforcing the need to accomplish common sense, good government reforms, and expressing appreciation for any reform that may have been adopted since the last contact.

Reference: NYSRTA Bylaws, Article II, Objectives 2, 3, & 5

The Resolutions Committee voted "To Recommend".

Resolution E-17-2: Mandating Seatbelts for All NY State Backseat Passengers Aged 16 or Older (Long Island Zone)

WHEREAS, New York State enacted the nation's first seat belt requirements for front seat passengers in 1984 and expanded seat belt laws in 2000 to include children aged 10 to 16 who sit in backseats, New York now lags behind 28 other states and the District of Columbia in not requiring anyone older than 16 who is riding in the rear seat to buckle up; and

WHEREAS, from 1994 to 2014, 886 backseat passengers 16 or older who were not buckled up were killed in car crashes in New York State; and

WHEREAS, backseat passengers from ages 16 to 24 had by far the lowest rate of belt usage and accounted for more than half of the fatalities; and

WHEREAS, people sitting in the backseat might feel they are at less risk of being ejected than those in front, they are twice as likely to kill front seat passengers by becoming a “bullet” if they are not wearing seat belts; and

WHEREAS, backseat passengers are three times more likely to be killed and eight times more likely to be seriously injured if they are not buckled up; and

WHEREAS, these kind of fatalities rise with the number of people who live in an area and how much driving they do; and

WHEREAS, we live in a state with heavy traffic congestion in urban, suburban, and rural areas that include recreational areas, college, university and high school campuses, senior citizen complexes, and shopping malls where many rear seat passengers are 16 years and older;

THEREFORE, be it RESOLVED that the NYSRTA support legislation to require all rear seat passengers 16 years or older to wear seat belts in New York State.

Reference: NYSRTA Bylaws, Article II, Objectives 2, 3, & 5

The Resolutions Committee voted “To Recommend”.

Resolution E-18-3: A Resolution to Oppose the 2017 Constitutional Convention Ballot Initiative (Northeastern and Long Island Zones)

WHEREAS, the New York State Constitution requires a ballot initiative be presented in 2017 to answer the question “*Shall there be a convention to revise the constitution and amend the same?*”; and

WHEREAS, the New York State Constitution provides for many protections for the citizens of New York State including but not limited to citizens’ rights to organize and bargain collectively, voting rights, entitlement to a free education, prohibition from using public funds to aid religious affiliated schools, conservation protections, and social safety nets; and

WHEREAS, your pension is now protected by both the New York State and Federal Constitutions; and

WHEREAS, your pension may not be reduced or infringed. If a Constitutional Convention, that protection may disappear; and

WHEREAS, your pension is now free of New York State Tax, but at a New York State Convention they may vote to tax your pension; and

WHEREAS, some citizens are calling for the convention to make changes in the constitution that could or should be considered through the conventional legislative and referendum process; and

WHEREAS, the cost estimates of conducting the convention could cost as much as \$138 million dollars and would be an unnecessary burden on an already tight budget; and

WHEREAS, you will be asked to vote on November 7, 2017, if we should hold this convention. You may want to vote NO; and

WHEREAS, after a careful reading of the constitution and considering the agenda many special interest groups and individuals might force on a convention, it is clear that the risks are high of all New Yorkers; and

WHEREAS, if there is a YES vote to hold this convention it could last until November 2019;

THEREFORE, be it RESOLVED that the NYSRTA opposes the 2017 Constitutional ballot, and

Be it further RESOLVED that the NYSRTA broaden its arguments of opposition to the convention by including other groups who could be harmed by the convention, and

Be it further RESOLVED that the NYSRTA make every effort to participate with coalitions representing both retired and active educators, as well as, other special interest groups who could be harmed by proposals made at the New York State Constitutional Convention, and

Be it further RESOLVED that the NYSRTA inform its members on these other issues and join the broader media campaign.

Reference: NYSRTA Bylaws, Article II, Objectives 2 & 3

The Resolutions Committee voted “To Recommend”.

Lastly, the Resolutions Committee is required to review annually the adopted resolutions and recommend for rescission for those which are no longer legal, timely, relevant, or have been accomplished. This was done, and there are no recommendations for rescission at this time.