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Task Force on Women's Issues

December 23, 2024

Dear Nassau Retirees Legal Fund Members and Nassau County Retirees,

As a former CSEA member in Nassau County, I stand with you in your fight to protect the health benefits you worked for, paid for, and were promised. Public service workers often choose lower-paying jobs in exchange for the assurance of contractual pension and health benefits in retirement. It is essential that public employers uphold these commitments, especially when they are embedded in Collective Bargaining Agreements.

Nassau County Executive Blakeman must keep you on the Empire Plan, as well as enact protections to prevent future changes.

I understand and support the following points:

- Upon retirement, retirees are no longer part of any bargaining unit. The law prohibits unions from representing both retirees and active employees simultaneously, so you could not have been part of the 2023 MOU negotiated between the County and the union of active employees.
- The CBA in effect at the time you retire governs your rights in retirement. Your CBA promised you County-paid health insurance that was vested for life with benefits that cannot be reduced, ever.
- The Collective Bargaining Agreement for retirees clearly states that health benefits cannot be diminished. The Federal Government defines the

“benefit” as the healthcare items or services covered under a health insurance plan.

- The current negotiations between the CSEA union and the County have no effect on past retirees. Retirees are entitled to fully-paid health insurance for life, with benefits at least as good as the NYSHIP Empire Plan.

We urge the County Executive to stand with retirees, who are among the most financially vulnerable individuals in our community by Publicly Standing down and leaving the retirees alone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gina L. Sillitti". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gina Sillitti
Member of the Assembly
District 16