

RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

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**THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK**



**SENATOR
STEVEN D. RHOADS
5TH DISTRICT**

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November 2024

Dear Nassau Retirees Legal Fund Members and Nassau County Retirees,

I want to take this opportunity to assure you that, while New York State Senate members do not oversee the daily operations of Nassau County, I am fully aware of your fight to protect the health benefits that you diligently worked for, paid into, and were assured upon your retirement. As public service workers, you made significant sacrifices by choosing careers that, while rewarding, often came with lower financial compensation in exchange for promises of secure pensions and health benefits. It is imperative that those promises are honored.

Having served as a Nassau County Legislator for nearly eight years and now as your State Senator, I have consistently advocated for the rights and protections of municipal employees, retirees, and union labor. I understand you were affected by the most recent collective bargaining agreement negotiated by the County Executive and CSEA leadership, that's why I am taking action at the State level to prevent the erosion of retiree benefits. I am proud to co-sponsor bill S.8388, which stands as a critical safeguard against the erosion of health insurance benefits for retirees and their dependents. This legislation aims to ensure that the level of health insurance benefits and contributions provided by public employers remains intact, protecting what you have rightfully earned. While the bill is still currently under review in committee, I am committed to returning to Albany with the intention of driving its passage, thus fortifying the health coverage for our retired public employees. At the discretion of the Governor and leadership in the Senate and the Assembly, a special legislative session before the end of the year can be called. I encourage you to contact Governor Hochul at (518) 474-8390, Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins at (518) 455-2715, and Speaker Heastie at (518) 455-3791 to call for a special session of the legislature to bring S.8388 to the floor for a vote.

Throughout my career, I have earned the trust and backing of organizations like the Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA), reflecting my steadfast commitment to supporting our dedicated public workforce. I recognize the challenges you currently face with the County, and I have been proactive in urging County leadership to seek solutions as well. I have been in touch with top CSEA and County representatives to encourage open and meaningful dialogue. It is my hope that through good-faith negotiations, they can swiftly resolve the pressing issues surrounding the County CSEA workforce and retiree health insurance plan. Together, we can reinforce the protections that our dedicated public servants rightly deserve.

If any additional information becomes available, I will be sure to contact you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steven D. Rhoads".

Steven D. Rhoads
New York State Senator, District 5