



NASSAU COUNTY LEGISLATURE

**Theodore Roosevelt Executive & Legislative Building
1550 Franklin Avenue, Suite 238
Mineola, N.Y. 11501
PHONE - (516) 571-6202
EMAIL - ONicks@NassauCountyNY.gov**

COMMITTEES

**Public Works & Parks
Planning, Development & The Environment
Economic & Community Development,
Labor & Transportation
Health & Social Services**

Dear Scott Cohen, Nassau Retirees Legal Fund Members, and Nassau County Retirees,

I would first like to introduce myself, as my short tenure in the Legislature has not yet afforded me much opportunity to work closely with you. I truly look forward to building a strong relationship and supporting the important efforts of your membership.

I am deeply aware of your concerns and your fight to protect the health benefits you worked for, paid for, and were promised. Public service employees often accept lower-paying jobs in exchange for the security of contractual pension and health benefits in retirement. Public employers must honor these commitments, especially when they are embedded in Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs).

I want to sincerely thank you for your years of service and dedication to Nassau County. Our County is stronger because of the foundation so many of you laid. Safeguarding retirees' access to affordable, reliable healthcare is a top priority for me. As long as the Empire State Plan remains available, I will use my voice to advocate for preserving this option for Nassau retirees. At a time when everyday costs are rising, you should not have to worry about whether you can afford basic healthcare.

I also stand with you in affirming the following:

- Because the law prohibits unions from representing both retirees and active employees simultaneously, retirees could not have been included in the 2023 Memorandum of Understanding negotiated between the County and the union representing active employees.
- The CBA in effect at the time of your retirement governs your rights in retirement. That agreement promised County-paid health insurance for life with benefits that cannot be diminished.
- The Federal Government defines a "benefit" as the healthcare items or services covered under a health insurance plan. Retirees are entitled to fully paid health insurance for life, with benefits at least as comprehensive as those offered by the NYSHIP Empire Plan.

I strongly urge the County Executive to stand with retirees, who are among the most financially vulnerable members of our community, by publicly committing to protect the benefits they were promised and by leaving retirees' health coverage untouched.

Thank you again for your service to Nassau County. Please know that I will continue to stand with you and advocate on your behalf.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Olena Nicks', with a stylized, flowing script.

Olena Nicks
Legislator
Nassau County Legislature (Second District)