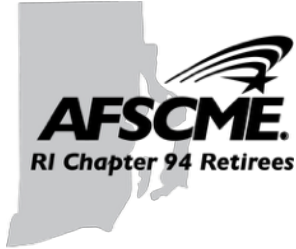


RI CHAPTER 94 NEWS, SEPTEMBER 2023

Legislative and Executive Board Report By the Chapter 94 Leadership



We gave it a good run. Although our COLA bill stalled in committee, we received positive feedback from many legislators and their staff about our bill—

they liked it. With so many pension proposals swirling around the State House, our bill and others gained little traction. We'll take the fractional COLAs for now, but our work continues. This Fall, we are meeting with our lobbyists to prepare to fight for COLAs when the General Assembly convenes in January.

We thank all Chapter 94 members who heeded our calls and contacted their legislators, advocating for our bill. One member and her family wrote dozens of letters to their state reps and senators. Another nearly blew up his cell by making many calls. Executive board members did the trifecta, calling, sending emails, and writing letters. Our lobbyists attended hearings and helped us develop testimony for the record. These efforts allowed us to elevate our profile on Smith Hill. But, Chapter 94 members, we can do better. So get your phone charged, pencils sharpened, and update your legislative contacts to prepare for our subsequent push to restore COLAs.

Chapter meetings begin on Tuesday, September 12, at Council 94, Ames Hall, Lower Level. The meeting space has been renovated and is well

Next Chapter Meeting

Tuesday, September 12 @ 1 pm
RI Council 94, Lower Level
1179 Charles St, No. Providence

Special Guest

Ted Nesi, Investigative Reporter
Channel 12, WPRI-TV

Questions?

Contact Chapter 94 Vice Presidents
Russ Marsocci and Ron Pepin

Russ Marsocci, Muni VP

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pbruins49@verizon.net

Ron Pepin, State VP

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ron.pepin.chapter94@gmail.com

Cindy LeBlanc, Office Manager

401-642-2434
clebanc@ricouncil94.org

Can't attend meetings in person?

*Join us via Zoom to attend meetings online.
Email State VP Ron Pepin to receive monthly
invitations and log-in instructions.*

Save the Dates

September 5
RI Primary, CD-1

October 10
Chapter 94 Meeting
Gregg Amore (invited)
RI Secretary of State

October 12
Chapter 94 Day of Golf
Louisissett Golf Course
Shotgun start 10 am, Lunch at Noon

(Leg) equipped to handle Zoom participants. We'll talk about our legislative agenda for 2024 and outline plans to move our Chapter forward.

Mike Connolly, President Report

On August 9, along with several Chapter 94 executive board members, I was honored to join Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, Council President Mike Downey, and other retiree and labor advocates at RI Council 94 to urge the passage of S-1174, the Social Security Fair Share Act.

As you know, I had a severe medical emergency last year, requiring lengthy hospital and rehabilitation stays, therapies, and numerous doctor visits and tests. Without essential medical care, paid for by Medicare and the financial support I receive from my monthly Social Security benefits, I would face bankruptcy. Rhode Islanders of all ages need Senator Whitehouse's bill, S-1174, to pass so that future generations can depend on Social Security and Medicare.



Senator Whitehouse joins labor and retiree activists, including Chapter 94 President Mike Connolly, at the RI Council 94 press conference on the Social Security Fair Share Act. *Photo: R. Pepin*

The Senator's bill would require high-wage earners making more than \$400,000 annually to contribute a fairer share to Social Security and close a loophole that allows pass-through businesses such as hedge funds and private equity firms to avoid Medicare taxes. The

Senator's proposal would extend Social Security solvency by 75 years. **MC**

Ron Pepin, State Report

I was excited to see over 200 retirees at our annual summer outing at Wright's Farm. I enjoyed the camaraderie and the food. I had a chance to meet, in person, Chapter members who usually join our monthly meetings via Zoom. Several Chapter 93 retirees, our friends from northern New England, made the trek.

Congratulations to Chapter member Agnes Chretien, who won the 50/50 raffle. Based on the response to the outing, we plan to do it again next summer. Save the date, July 25, 2024.

The Chapter donated half of the raffle proceeds to the local affiliate of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP). Since suicide rates have returned to pre-pandemic levels, our support for AFSP and its outreach and educational efforts is timely.

Here's my monthly pitch to join a meeting on Zoom. You can log in on your smartphone, tablet, computer, or home television. We have the equipment and capacity to handle many participants. It's 30 to 45 minutes of your time, one day a month. You can even attend Chapter Executive Board meetings. Please email me to receive a Zoom invitation. **RP**

Russ Marsocci, Muni Report

The Chapter Executive Board accepted the resignation of Norman Landroche. He was appointed Magistrate for the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal. We thank Norman for his work on behalf of the Chapter and the Executive Board. He will continue his membership in the Chapter. Congratulations, Norman, on your appointment. Our loss is Rhode Island's gain.

(Muni) We have reprinted and enclosed the July notice from ERSRI about the TIAA data breach. TIAA is the defined contribution plan vendor. This breach may impact you, family members, and friends. Over 600 government entities, contractors, colleges, and pension funds have been breached. According to cybercrime experts, that number is only the tip of the iceberg.

This data breach and the one at RIPTA underscore our exposure to the seamy side of the digital age. You may have to take the view of many—do what you can to keep your data safe. It means changing passwords, limiting online activities, changing financial institutions, monitoring your credit, etc. Don't hesitate to freeze your credit when you learn about a breach. This means that the credit reporting agencies deny access to your credit report. Be diligent!

Our May meeting at the Warwick Central Library yielded the largest turnout in quite a while. We plan to hold more Chapter gatherings around the state. Send me ideas for future sites. The criteria? A 4-hour block of time to allow for the Executive Board meeting, seating for 35-40 participants, off-street parking, preferably a public facility (after all, we're public sector retirees), and the capacity for Zoom broadcasts.

Let's organize a competition to recruit the most new Chapter 94 members. It could run like this: members who sign up retirees on an official Chapter 94 membership card would jot their names on the back. We'll track cards and recognize the retiree who recruits the most new members by awarding a prize. The drive would run from October to May 30. Let me know your thoughts about this contest.

Our planned lawsuit against the West Warwick Schools regarding changes to spousal health care continues. We are pursuing further discussions with West Warwick police and firefighters challenging the Town's decision to alter disability benefits. We also expect to resume meetings with the retired Coventry Police. **RM**

Did you miss this? *It's easier to stay current with your immunizations now that retirees with Medicare Part D pay nothing out of pocket for many vaccines.*

Medicare Part D now covers these vaccines and more at no cost: Shingles, RSV, Tetanus/diphtheria (Td), Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough) (Tdap), Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, if you're at low risk for the virus. Medicare still covers flu shots, COVID-19 vaccines, and pneumococcal shots.

Effective this year, your Medicare drug plan can't charge you more than \$35 for a one-month supply of insulin, and you don't have to pay a deductible for your insulin. Find more information at [medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov).

Dolores Waves Bye-Bye to Summer

I love the summer months. It means beaches, local fairs, and feasts where people line up for sugar-cruled doughboys. Or folks sitting in the backyard, roasting marshmallows on a fire pit, hoping to make the perfect s'more. I love the warmth instead of cold days. Give me shorts any day, rather than a winter jacket.

September approaches. Our Chapter meetings restart, meaning the summer days are waning. The transition is always bittersweet. These warm days may ebb away, but I will enjoy the football games soon, although I may have to forego the shorts and don a winter jacket. **DB**

Volunteers Needed for Chapter 94 Golf Outing
Email editor94news@gmail.com



First Annual RI Chapter 94 Retirees Golf Outing
We're trying this again at a different course!

Thursday, October 12, 2023
Louisquisett Golf Course
1 Overlook Circle
North Providence, RI 02904

Registration @ 9 am
Shot Gun Start @10 am

Join us for a fun day of golf. Play for bragging rights in this non-competitive event.

Longest drive contest (men & women)
Closest to the pin (men & women) and more

Golf: \$20 per person, \$80 for a foursome
Includes 9 holes of golf, cart, lunch and a 50/50 raffle ticket

Lunch only: \$10 per person
Includes food and 50/50 raffle ticket

Minimum 36 golfers needed or the event is canceled.
Maximum golfers is 54.

Questions?
Russ Marsocci, Muni VP
pbruins49@verizon.net
401-339-9224

Mary Riley, Golf Coordinator
cuffriley@yahoo.com

PA Smith, Golf Helper
editor94news@gmail.com

RI Chapter 94 Retirees Office
401-642-2434

Registration
RSVP by September 30, 2023

Checks payable to
AFSCME RI Chapter 94 Retirees
1179 Charles St, North Providence, RI 02904

Player (\$20) _____
Phone with area code _____
Email _____

Player (\$20) _____
Phone with area code _____
Email _____

Player (\$20) _____
Phone with area code _____
Email _____

Player (\$20) _____
Phone with area code _____
Email _____

Social, no golf

Lunch Only (\$10) _____
Phone with area code _____
Email _____

Don't have any golf buddies?
We'll find a group for you.



PBI Data Breach – Update 7/8/2023

What happened?

ERSRI was recently informed by TIAA, the Defined Contribution Plan vendor, about a cybersecurity incident. This incident involves a software application called MOVEit that is used by TIAA's vendor, Pension Benefit Information, LLC ("PBI"), for file transfer purposes. PBI receives personal data of individual participants and clients and matches it against death notices and obituaries to assist TIAA in death claim and beneficiary processes.

PBI notified TIAA that a previous vulnerability in their MOVEit Transfer Application allowed their data to be downloaded by an unauthorized third party.

PBI disclosed that they have communicated specific impacts to federal law enforcement and to their institutional clients, including TIAA. PBI has also informed TIAA that it has resolved the vulnerability, while also adding additional security measures.

TIAA has informed ERSRI that it continues to monitor all participant accounts and has not detected unusual activity attributable to the MOVEit incident at this time. They are also monitoring online account access and registration and have measures in place to deny access as needed. More information is available at [Customer Protection Policy | TIAA](#).

Please be advised that this event did not involve unauthorized access to the ERSRI (i.e., the Defined Benefit Plan) secure network. No member or beneficiary ERSRI accounts or financial information in the Defined Benefit Plan was involved in this incident. Pension payments are not affected by this incident.

What personal information was involved and who was impacted?

What

Personal information included: first and last names, addresses, dates of birth, social security numbers, and gender.

Who

- Participants with a TIAA plan account balance greater than \$0.00 who have not made a contribution to their TIAA plan account in the last 90 days:
 - Former employees who contributed to their TIAA plan in the past (included because such participants still have a TIAA plan account balance).
 - Current employees who used to, but are not currently, contributing to their TIAA plan account.

- Participants who are receiving retirement income from some but not all of their TIAA plan account assets.
- Participants who are receiving retirement income payments, even though they may currently be contributing to their TIAA plan account.

What can you do to protect yourself?

- Remain vigilant to threats of identity theft or fraud by regularly reviewing and monitoring your accounts and credit history for signs of unauthorized transactions or activity.
- If you ever suspect you are a victim of identity theft or fraud, you can contact your local police. You can also access additional information online on how to protect your identity at <https://www.consumer.gov/idtheft>
- For additional security information for your account, [please see the document at this link \[click.e.tiaa.org\]](#) with steps to help stay safe online.

ERSRI will continue to monitor the situation and keep members informed. PBI will be sending a letter to the members and beneficiaries whose information was involved in the coming weeks and offering free credit monitoring services. In the meantime, TIAA may be reached through its customer service line at **(800) 842-2252** from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time to answer questions.