

***State President's Report***  
**April 2007**

Respectfully submitted by: **Thomas P. Canzarella**

**Testimony before the Senate & Assembly Budget Committees**

On March 13th and 14th the NJFOP and PFANJ provided joint testimony before the Budget Committees in both Houses charged with assisting in determining what legislation may or may not advance relative to the State's budget due in place as a matter of law by July 1, 2007. As you will recall the lack of a consensus on the part of the Governor, both Houses and the political parties themselves led to a shut down of government last summer. While we do not expect such a situation this time it remains essential as we go forward that we keep proper pension funding and no changes made on the backs of those who paid their fair share on the minds of all Members of the Legislature. To that end our statement has been forwarded to every single Member of the Senate and General Assembly as part of a special mailing.

**Recent News Articles Concerning NJ Pension Systems**

We've included a couple of enlightening articles regarding the pension fiasco that are not only of significant educational value to our membership, but to legislators themselves charged with straightening the mess they created out. That said, several of those articles might as well be taken directly from the complaint filed by the PFANJ and NJFOP versus the State of New Jersey - an action that a judge charged with determining the merits of our case has agreed should go forward. Copies of these articles are being sent to every Member of the Legislature in that they mirror our complaint.

**Cap Law**

An April 3<sup>rd</sup> news article appearing in the Bergen County's "The Record" newspaper wrongly stated that negotiated salaries are outside the newly revised and imposed Budget Cap that are part and parcel of recently enacted legislation (A-1 of 2007) recently signed into law and as reported and worked on by this union. The fact is that salaries and pension costs are inside the cap with the portion of health care driven by the State Health Benefit System used as a quantifier outside the cap. Please find a legislative synopsis of the bill as it relates to the laws impact upon collective bargaining. State Counsel Raymond Heineman is preparing an in-depth analysis for presentation at our upcoming convention. Unfortunately there are aspects of the Cap Law, particularly those relating to the Department of Community Affairs role (in granting cap relief) during or after the arbitration process in the event of an award above cap, that seemingly must be 'road tested' during the process of which will certainly include in-depth financial analysis and related submissions of evidence, retort by the opposition, and where or how the arbitrator finally falls is anyone's guess. That said, if the intention was to dissuade parties from going to full arbitration this might be the most successful effort to date.

**Federal Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act**

We were asked by the IAFF to specifically target several members of the NJ Republican Congressional Delegation namely Representatives Chris Smith, James Saxton, Michael Ferguson, Scott Garrett and Robert Frelinghuysen resulting in Congressmen Smith and Saxton signing on as cosponsors. IAFF political director Kevin O'Connor was pleased enough with our success to make a special call thanking the troops.

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### **Surveillance Cameras**

As we have had several instances wherein the installation of surveillance cameras in the workplace has become an issue so have we asked State Labor Counsel Raymond Heineman from Kroll, Heineman & Giblin to prepare a legal overview. Please see that work product in the packet.

### **Convention & Affiliate Leadership Seminar**

The draft agenda for matters we intend to address at the upcoming convention are as follows: Aside from general business, along with visits from guests and dignitaries; Handling Discipline and Discharge in Accordance with the Duty of Fair Representation, Strategies for Preserving Health Care as an Employer Provided Benefit, Pension Litigation Update, Prospective Retiree Issues, and of course resolutions. Initial convention paperwork is a part of this month's packet with a formal mailing about a week off. Please note: All hotel accommodation are to be done through Eleanor at the State Office. The dates for the Annual convention & Affiliate Leadership Seminar are early check-in May 28th, full business days on May 28<sup>th</sup> and 30th, with June 1st as a "clean up day."

### **Firefighters & Heart Disease**

See the Associated Press account of a recent study concerning heart related injuries and death amongst firefighters, and an editorial authored by the PFANJ in August of 2006 (when this study was first announced) pointing out the role overwork and stress inflict upon our profession as a contributing factor due to type of heavy work we perform when compounded by understaffing per unit of response. Our piece in no way refutes any study relating heart attack and stroke to poor diet or lack of exercise however, merely attempts to point out the role stress and overwork play in this regard and that such needs to be included and considered as part of the overall problem. Our concern in this regard being that it is entirely too easy to pass this type of injury off on the firefighter without taking responsibility for the unsafe working condition. No matter what situation you work staffing-wise the fact remains you still need to take better care of your health. See our support of the Captain Buscio Cardiac Screening Program as evidence of same on the PFANJ website.

### **Valor Awards Event**

The Annual Bravest of the Brave Valor Awards Ceremony is scheduled for Saturday, April 28, 2007, at the Jersey City Hyatt-on-the-Hudson, beginning at 9:30am. By now all locals with honorees have been so advised by both email and regular mail. It is the local who made the nominations responsibility to make sure honorees are notified of the date, time and place to appear - including contacting the State Office confirming their attendance. Information relating to the taking of ads should be out in the mail by now.