

## LETTER TO LEGISLATOR GUIDE

Use this guide to compose your own letter to your legislators. For information about how to find your legislator, contact your local or visit [www.cwanj.org](http://www.cwanj.org)

[Your Name]  
[Street Address]  
[City, ST ZIP Code]

[Today's Date]

The Honorable [Write Your Assemblyperson's Name]  
[Street Address]  
[City, ST ZIP Code]

Dear Assemblyman/Assemblywoman [Write Your Assemblyperson's Name]:

I am writing to ask you to oppose the Pension and Health Benefit Reform Bills for Public Employees. I am a public employee in [Name of Town Where You Work], and I [Describe Your Job].

The Assembly bills are A2461, A2460 and A2459. They are unfair, and they use public employees to score political points without solving the real problems of the state.

[Here are some points you can make, or write your own]

- One of the biggest priorities for legislators should be finding solutions to New Jersey's budget crisis. But these bills won't affect one dime of government spending in the current budget and won't get us anywhere towards a balanced budget for this year. Making reactionary changes to the pension system right now won't get us any closer to solving this year's budget crisis.
- There is a provision in one bill that eliminates the non-forfeitable right for anyone who does not have five years or more of service. That means that anyone who does not have five years or more of service may not be able to count on retirement security.
- Despite what Governor Christie says, I am not going to get a \$3.3 million pension. In fact, I'm not going to get anything near that. The average pension for a state worker with 25 years of service is about \$35,000, and the average pension for a local government worker with 25 years is less than \$32,000. Laws should be made to stop people abusing the pension system and driving up the costs to taxpayers, but the only way I am getting a \$3.3 million pension is if I live to be 160 years old.
- One of the bills would create allow new hires and any employee with less than 10 years of service to enter a 401(k). This would mean the state would have to pay more matching funds to immediately fund the 401(k) and it would decrease the amount of money coming into the pension. Taking more money out of the pension and putting less money into the pension will hardly solve the problems with my pension plan.

- One of the bills would create a tiered system of benefits for pensioners. It is not fair for two people to be doing the same job and be paid differently. Additionally, this will pit workers against other workers and diminish morale in my work place.
- Eliminating Disability Retirement and the Sick Leave Injury Program is simply unfair. A worker who gets hurt on the job shouldn't have to live in fear that he or she won't be able to provide for his or her family because of a work-related injury.
- As an intermittent employee, I fought for 15 years to have the right to bargain for health benefits. One of the bills takes away my ability to even bargain for health benefits with a stroke of the pen.
- The bills don't realistically address the biggest problem with the pension plan: Even though I've made my contributions every pay check the state has contributed \$1.5 billion to the Pension Fund in the past 15 years and allowed local governments numerous pension holidays. If the legislature is serious about reforming the pension plan, the issue of funding the pension should be considered first, not after all the changes have been made to the benefits.
- The amount I pay for my health care is an issue best left to those who are familiar with the employment conditions in my workplace, not the political whims in Trenton. Unilaterally imposing health care costs for all employees sets a dangerous precedent that politicians in Trenton can change things like this without the bargaining process sets a very dangerous precedent. You may agree with it this time, but you may think it is a very bad idea the next time the legislature gets involve on this level.

As a public worker, I go to work every day and do my best to keep New Jersey working. I take my responsibilities very seriously and I do it even though people in the public call me lazy and politicians use me to score cheap political points whenever they feel like it. All I am asking for is a fair deal when it comes to my health insurance and my retirement security.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to oppose the Pension and Health Benefit Reform package for public workers.

Sincerely,

**[Sign Your Name]**