

Pension Fight 2026 Campaign Launch

AUGUST 19TH, 2026

Agenda

- Intros
- What is a Union?
- Where we've been
- Where we're going
- Feedback and Next Steps

Intros:

- Name
- Local

Intros:

What is one thing you'd improve
about our pension
if you had a magic wand?

What is a Union?

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A Union is **an organization of workers** who use **power in numbers** to protect what we like, and change what we don't, about our jobs and our communities.

The Union is ALL of us.

WHERE DOES OUR POWER COME FROM?

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In the workplace and in our community, all our power comes from **power in numbers**.

We use our power in numbers through member participation and unity.

Where we've been:

- Cuts in 2005
- Devastating cuts in 2011
 - Some progress through lawsuit settlement
- Pension Working Group in 2023
- First big win in 38 years in 2024
 - 5 to 3
- WEP/GPO repeal in 2025
- TSB win in 2026

Where we've been:

- NEARI PACE created the pension subgroup in 2025
- Discussed several challenges:
 - We are divided on what to prioritize
 - Since 2024, we have not identified one ambitious, achievable, impactful goal
 - We have not engaged members in a real fight
 - Members feel hopeless that things will change
 - Federal cuts have made any significant state spending harder to win

Where we've been:

- A lot of discussion on whether we should focus more on retirement age or accrual rate.
- Discussed several ideas for path forward
- Goal must be:
 - Ambitious
 - Achievable
 - Impactful
 - Equitable

Where we've been:

- Came up with several options to fight for next:
 - Rule of 90:
 - How does minimum age of 60 impact this?
 - How many members would actually benefit?
 - Increase accrual rate:
 - Could focus on people with more years of service (i.e. 20 years)
 - Could help pay for it by reducing TIAA contributions
 - Increase state funding:
 - Higher raises means higher pensions
 - Added benefit of getting the money upfront and improving staffing

Where we've been:

- Came up with several options to fight for next:
 - Reduce penalty to 3%/year
 - Will help members retire earlier, easier to win than Rule of 90?
 - Make 135 days count as a year for parental/sick leave
 - Expand TIAA investment options
 - Increase TIAA investments at expense of DB pension

Where we're going:

- Aug. 19th:
 - Meet with local leaders to review plan
 - Launch survey
 - Educate members about the pension system
 - Get feedback on which issues are most important to our members, so we know what to prioritize

Where we're going:

- September to October 2026:
 - Push out survey, **goal is getting 50% of members in pension locals to participate**
 - All Member Virtual Town Hall
 - Answer questions, get feedback, review plan
 - Invite New York teacher to speak about what worked for them
 - Establish Pension Action Team

Where we're going:

- November-December, 2026:
 - Analyze survey results
 - Send out results of survey with election update
 - Develop legislation, find sponsors.
 - Legislation should be ambitious, achievable, and impactful.
 - Ambitious: It will be more ambitious than we think we can win
 - Achievable: It won't be so ambitious that it's impossible
 - Impactful: We want to focus on what members say will most impact them

Where we're going:

- January 2027:
 - Introduce legislation.
 - Send out info on legislation introduced and next steps
 - Advocacy Day RSVP.
- March 2027:
 - NEARI Advocacy Day (formerly Lobby Day)
- April-May 2027:
 - Launch postcard campaign (goal is 60% of members in pension locals)
 - Regional Candidate Forums (brunch/dinner)
 - Meet with legislative leaders to lobby
 - Pension Action Team meetings

Where we're going:

- May 2027:
 - Continue meeting with the state leaders.
 - Pension Action Team continues to meet.
- May-June 2027:
 - Win as much as we can.
- Summer 2027:
 - Debrief, evaluate progress and next steps.
 - If insufficient progress, plan additional actions for 2028
- 2028:
 - Continue campaign culminating in statewide rally or action in May or June of 2028

Feedback:

- Feedback on overall plan

Feedback:

- Feedback on Survey:
 - How can we maximize participation?
 - How do we make sure different types of members are participating?
 - Very important that younger teachers participate as well so we don't have skewed results

Feedback:

- Feedback on Survey:
 - Script for membership meetings
 - Use your phone trees
 - Make sure building reps have 1-on-1 conversations
 - Fil can send you updated lists of who from your local has completed the survey so you can chase down others
 - This will require you to stay organized
 - Consider appointing point people from your local

Next Steps:

- All member Virtual Campaign Launch, _DATE_
- Get at least 50% of members in your local to complete survey
- Locals with most participation over course of campaign will win Pension Champion Award

WHEN WE FIGHT, WE WIN!

