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May 2024

RE: Supporting Statement for Bill S5639B - Protecting Health Insurance

The Council of Administrators and Supervisors (CAS) strongly supports the passage of Bill S5639B, which would amend subdivision 1 of Section 161-a of the Civil Service Law. This bill helps to safeguard health insurance benefits within the public sector.

Bill S5639B would provide an additional layer of protection for retirees from potential disruptions to their health insurance plans. Retirees have dedicated their careers to public service, and ensuring their access to affordable, dependable healthcare is paramount. This bill prevents automatic application of collectively bargained changes that could decrease coverage or reimbursements, causing financial hardship and jeopardizing the well-being of retired or non-unionized individuals. Bill S5639B promotes transparency and fairness in the health benefits system. Changes made during the collective bargaining process focused on active employees should not unintentionally impact retired or non-unionized employees.

CAS believes that Bill S5639B strikes a necessary balance between respecting the collective bargaining process and safeguarding the well-being of non-represented employees and retirees. We urge the passage of this bill to ensure fairness and transparency in health insurance benefits for all public employees in New York State.

Very truly yours,

Albert H. Voorneveld