

## **The New Jersey State AFL-CIO Retirees 2005 Annual Report**

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The New Jersey State AFL-CIO Retirees Committee continues to grow, and is active and engaged in all phases of the labor movement, with particular emphasis on healthcare education and advocacy for union retirees and their families. Highlights of the year include:

- Two Retirees delegates attended the annual Families USA Conference, a national healthcare advocacy conference. Materials received were distributed to the delegates, and helped frame their work for the year.
- Began working with the NJ State AFL-CIO to address the Bush administration's plan to privatize Social Security and decided to focus on this issue rather than hold their annual legislative conference. Retirees participated in letter and email campaigns, attended a variety of forums held by NJ Congressmen and Senators Corzine and Lautenberg, and attended an AARP sponsored event at IBEW Local 164 that attracted over 650 retirees. They also sent a resolution to the NJ State AFL-CIO recommending a filibuster of any attempt to privatize Social Security.
- Secretary-Treasurer Laurel Brennan addressed the Retirees meeting, presenting both the National and State AFL-CIO Social Security anti-privatization strategy to delegates. Delegates participated in the State Federation's rally in Trenton on March 24, and anti-privatization events held in Burlington and Bergen counties.
- Two NJ State AFL-CIO Retirees were notified they had been selected to receive Governors' Awards for Volunteerism for 20 years of volunteer service to Habitat for Humanity, having been nominated by the NJ State AFL-CIO Officers. Both are IBEW Retirees from Locals 400 and 456. Two delegates also reported phone-banking for the successful (second) election of a labor candidate to the Little Falls town council. Retirees sent a resolution to the NJ State AFL-CIO in support of protecting Medicare, and attended the State Employees Rally, co-sponsored by the State Federation, to protect employee pensions.
- Delegates wrote letters, testified and attended the State Federation co-sponsored rally in Trenton protesting the State Health Benefits Retirees Prescription Drug Cap Elimination.
- Retirees' delegates attended the NJ State AFL-CIO Legislative Conference. Health Literacy was chosen as the topic for the annual Eldercare Conference and planning began. Two Retirees delegates were chosen by Congressman Rush Hold to attend the National Conference on Aging, representing New Jersey.
- Delegates mobilized for the election, participating in the NJ State AFL-CIO labor walks and phone banking. delegates held their most successful Eldercare Conference "Health Literacy for Retirees" at UAW Region 9 in Edison (program attached), attended by over 150 union retirees. Governor-elect/Senator Jon Corzine addressed the attendees, and the event received television coverage on NJN's nightly newscast. A "Health Literacy Report and Resource Guide" has been produced to be distributed statewide.