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ARTC is a 501C-4 organization

*Dear Members,*

The Association of Retired Teachers of CT worked hard this past legislative session to secure two additional seats at the Teachers' Retirement Board (TRB) to address retired teacher needs.

Teachers work their entire career with the promise of benefits that they will depend on in their retirement. Now is the time to vote for representatives who will speak up on our behalf.

Rarely do you hear the pension performance, our COLA or the cost disparity of the Medicare Supplement plan openly discussed by the Board. These important issues directly affect the daily lives of teachers in their retirement. Teachers who attend TRB meetings are only allowed a 2-minute period to comment at the end and are restricted from asking questions. Since the Board does not respond to their comments, a healthy exchange of views is absent. Clearly, better communication is needed.

It's time we have representatives to ask questions and bring important retirement concerns to the table.

Please read the bios of Rita McDougald-Campbell and Edwin Vargas in this newsletter. You will see why ARTC believes they are the best representatives to bring YOUR voice to the Teachers' Retirement Board!

**Sincerely, Carol L. Noble President**

**Two Additional Retired Teacher Members on the TRB**

With a bipartisan bill introduced by Rep. Rutigliano (R-Trumbull) and Rep. Kavros DeGraw (D-Avon/Canton), retirees will have a better balance of representation and voice on the TRB following the upcoming election of two additional retired teacher representatives.

The date for this election is to occur on or before October 1, 2023.

The reasons are many as to why ARTC, beginning with discussions in the Legislative Committee, worked so hard to get this bill passed as written. Retired teachers should have fair and equal representation on the very Board that manages their defined benefit retirement plan and negotiates their insurance plans (next negotiations in 2024). Retirees contributed to both the pension and health plans all their working years. The passage of this bill was **unanimous** in the Appropriations Committee, and in both the House and the Senate. ARTC worked hard and achieved getting HB 6489 passed with the following:

- Two additional retirees on the Board
- Only retired teachers vote for the two additional retiree positions
- The election for the additional members to take place this year, on or before Oct 1, 2023.
- No insurance restrictions on the candidates

Fortunately, our lobbyists, AFT lobbyists, ARTC Legislative Committee along with PAC and many retirees contacted legislators to educate them about the bill and secure their vote.

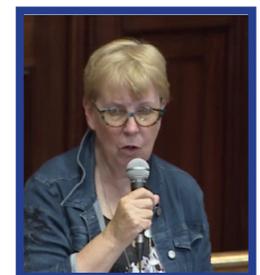
**Please take advantage of this success and vote for your two new retired teacher representatives!**



Rep. Mike Dagostino brings HB 6489 to the floor of the House.



Rep Tammy Nuccio supports a friendly amendment



Sen. Cathy Osten (Co-Chair of Appropriations) calls for a vote in the Senate to pass HB 6489!

## Endorsement for Rita

“What I admire about Rita McDougald-Campbell is that she gracefully and persistently gets to the bottom of complex situations. Retired teachers will come to appreciate her abilities and sensibilities while representing them.”

Walt Ciplinski, ARTC Insurance Committee Co-Chair



### Rita McDougald-Campbell

In her 25 years as a public educator, Rita served as an English teacher, a building administrator, and as a district human resources director.

Prior to becoming a public educator/administrator, she worked as a university administrator and in marketing management in both corporate and municipal arenas.

Rita earned a B.S. and an Ed. M. from Boston University, Secondary English certification from SCSU, and advanced graduate certificates in Educational Administration and Human Resources Management from Sacred Heart University.

In retirement, Rita has served on boards and committees of ARTC, CEA-R, and GBRTA, tirelessly advocating for retired educator issues. “I would be honored to continue that representation as a member of the State Teachers’ Retirement Board. I believe my educational preparation and professional experiences have more than prepared me for Board service.”

**The ARTC Insurance Committee continues to believe that Original Medicare, and the access to care that it guarantees, must remain as a choice for retired teachers at the Teachers’ Retirement Board. Retired teachers paid into the Health Insurance Fund all their working years and now they pay for the vast majority of their own Health Insurance premiums. And so, retirees deserve the choice of Original Medicare to be there when they need it. Additionally, the competition of high quality healthcare choices brought by the Medicare Supplement option assures both plans will be better.**



### Edwin Vargas, Jr.

With a Bachelors of Science in Education and a Master’s Degree in Public Administration from the University of Hartford, Ed taught in the Hartford Public Schools for 35

years (1972 – 2007). Throughout his teaching career, Ed was a Hartford Federation of Teachers leader serving in multiple capacities including president, chief negotiator, and grievance chair. He also held numerous leadership roles at the local, state, and national levels in labor, political, community, nonprofit, and civil rights organizations.

Ed is currently serving as the Gov. O’Neil Endowed Chair and Political Science professor at Central Conn. State University. He previously served as a state legislator for five terms in the Connecticut House of Representatives where he retired as Deputy Speaker. Immediately prior to his retirement, he was reelected unanimously by his constituents in Hartford and West Hartford to a sixth term which he chose to forgo when he accepted his current role in academia.

### What’s on the Table ?

#### The issues of importance that affect retired teachers

- Paying down the \$ 17.5 billion unfunded Pension liability.
- Asking the State to contribute yearly excess from “rainy day fund”
- Strengthening pension through maintaining a realistic COLA.
- Improving “investment fund” performance.
- Maintaining a choice of health insurance plans which includes Original Medicare.
- Addressing the huge cost disparity between the Original Medicare Supplement and the Advantage Plan.
- Working to improve healthy and open communications between TRB and its members.

## Bringing YOUR voice to the Table at TRB!

*Strengthening your Pension*

*Saving Medicare Choice at the Teachers Retirement Board*

*Improving Communications*

## **PAC asked members' questions of the ARTC candidates:**

### **Rita McDougald-Campbell**

**Q: In your role as a retiree representative on TRB, how do you plan to make a difference for retired teachers if elected?**

*A. I would continue to speak with educators to learn of their concerns and to bring those issues to the Board for review and discussion. I would work to open the process so that proposed policy and procedural changes are discussed and explained during meetings. I want the TRB to be a much more transparent organization than it has been in the past.*

**Q: Do you believe it is important for the TRB to continue to offer the choice of an Original Medicare Supplement plan along with an Advantage plan?**

*A. It is important for TRB to continue to provide both the traditional Medicare Supplement and the privatized Advantage plans so that enrollees will have a choice. Many studies have shown that as seniors age, those who are enrolled in traditional Medicare with Supplement have much better health outcomes, and they fare better with receiving necessary treatments without experiencing delays caused by network restrictions and prior authorization requirements.*

**Q: What is your understanding of the current state of our pension fund?**

*A. The good news is that the unfunded liability for the fund has decreased in recent years. However, the bad news is that as of 2022, the unfunded liability stands at approximately \$17 billion. That represents a funding level of about 57%.... It is imperative that the State continues to make its full annual contribution to both the pension and health insurance funds, and that it invests our funds wisely to ensure that the funds make continual gains...*

### **Ed Vargas**

**Q: In your role as a retiree representative on TRB, how do you plan to make a difference for retired teachers if elected?**

*A: I will work towards improving communications, keeping the cost of living on par with inflation, and preserving our health care options. I further believe that I can advocate effectively for our retirees before our state legislators.*

**Q: Do you believe it is important for the TRB to continue to offer the choice of an Original Medicare Supplement plan along with an Advantage plan? Explain.**

*A: Absolutely, without the existence of the public option that Medicare provides there would be little incentive for the private Advantage plan to remain competitive.*

**Q: What is your understanding of the current state of our pension fund?**

*A: Our plan is still far from being fully funded even though our state has recently made major contributions to the fund. We must continue to advocate for full funding so that we do not have to rely on decades of amortization. The ability to meet a reasonable cost of living (COLA) relies on the health of the fund.*

## **Endorsement for Ed**

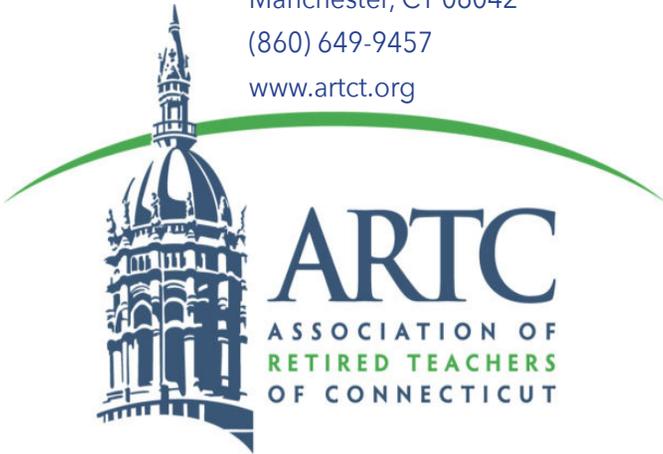
The leadership of NHFT-933R supports **Ed Vargas** as a qualified, experienced person for the TRB Board based on Ed's experience as: a retired Hartford teacher, past HFT President, Chief Negotiator Treasurer and Grievance Chair and Executive Vice-President of AFT. Ed also served 5 terms in the CT House of Representatives and supported legislation concerning retired teachers' issues.

**Nancy Charest President, NHFT-933R**

**VISIT US AT [WWW.ARTCT.ORG](http://WWW.ARTCT.ORG)**

Since 1946, ARTC has been a retiree organization exclusively representing CT Retired Teachers.

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## VOTE for Rita and Ed as your Representatives at the TRB Table

### Endorsements for Rita and Ed

“It is crucial that we elect TRB candidates who have the knowledge and experience to advocate for all retired teachers. The ARTC is supporting two exceptional candidates. **Rita McDougald-Campbell** has been active with ARTC on the Legislative/Insurance Committee for the past several years, where she has been dedicated to improving health care benefits and efficient communications with the TRB. She will be a very strong voice on the TRB. **Ed Vargas** is widely known as an ardent and outspoken advocate for retired teachers over many years. His knowledge and experience in the legislature will be a great asset serving all retirees while sitting on the TRB.”

**Tom Singleton, Past President ARTC (2012-2016)**

“Health Insurance in retirement is a benefit that is of crucial importance. We can’t take that for granted. We need representatives at the TRB who have an understanding of the complexities of Medicare, so they can represent the needs of retired teachers. **Rita McDougald Campbell** and **Ed Vargas** will bring informed voices and create a healthy discussion of the importance of Medicare choice at the TRB.”

**Rick Follman, Past Chair of ARTC Insurance Committee**

“**Ed Vargas** has vast experience as a social studies teacher, union president (HFT) and as a state representative for several terms. He has always been active as a leader, working to help people. He listens and does the work needed to deeply understand issues (as was obvious when he immersed himself in learning about the many facets of Medicare). Besides being a font of information on many topics, Ed is a people person. He listens, he researches, and he responds! What an asset he would be to our TRB!”

**June Pinkin, HFT-Retired, Past President**

“It is a pleasure to endorse **Rita McDougald-Campbell** for the TRB Board. Rita and I serve as Legislative co-chairs on Greater Bridgeport Retired Teacher Association, CEA Retired Teacher Association and ARTC. Rita’s keen sense of understanding of retirement issues will serve all of retired teachers well. Rita will be a strong voice to advocate for retired teachers’ health and pension benefits. She will use every opportunity to have open communication and transparency. If elected to the TRB Board, Rita’s dedication and commitment will be unparalleled.”

**Marie Petitti, ARTC, PAC Co-chair**

“**Edwin Vargas** has been an advocate for teachers for the 40 years I have known him and I am thrilled to learn he is running for the TRB. As a teacher, a union officer and a State Representative elected from Hartford, he has focused on, and has a vast knowledge of, healthcare and pension issues. He will be an invaluable asset finding sustainable solutions to issues affecting retired teachers. He has demonstrated that he will put in the work necessary, and build consensus, to get results.”

**Mary Moninger-Elia, National WEP/GPO Repeal Task Force, ARTC, AFT-Retirees**

