

ARTC'S SUCCESSFUL JOURNEY TO THE FAIR TAX BREAK FOR ALL RETIRED TEACHERS

Getting the 50% tax exemption for 2021 involved the advocacy of many ARTC members over several years. ARTC initiated the effort and our members pushed it to the finish line in 2021. Here is an abbreviated history of the journey.

Long before the present Legislature and Governor, past ARTC Historian John Kane was enthusiastically proposing a tax break for Connecticut's retired teachers. His mother's home in Stamford was near then Mayor Dannel Malloy's mother's home, **and John would often share his concerns with Mayor Malloy about teachers' pension having no CT income tax exemption comparable to the existing Social Security exemption.**

Sometime later, as ARTC Legislative Co-Chairs, we were invited to a Channel 8 interview to discuss retired teacher issues. Along with the pension, we stressed the need for equitable tax breaks from the State comparable to those on Social Security. Malloy, now running for Governor, was in the studio as well and, hearing our concerns, elaborated on them when he was interviewed.

Later Candidate Dannel Malloy, along with other gubernatorial candidates, spoke at ARTC's annual Luncheon. All candidates were asked to commit supporting our defined benefit pension, our health insurance as well as a tax exclusion. Malloy committed support for the pension and health insurance but only tentatively commented on the tax exclusion. To advocate further, we met with former Speaker of the House Joe Aresimowicz and former President Pro Temp of the Senate Don Williams. ARTC Insurance Chair Rick Follman met with Senator Bob Duff, and ARTC members contacted their legislators as well.

When Governor Malloy ran for a second term, he announced, at another ARTC meeting, that he would support the CT tax exclusion, singling out ARTC's John Kane for his influence. The only retired teacher organization invited to attend Malloy's public announcement was our former ARTC President Tom Singleton, representing all retired teachers. Malloy kept his promise; the Legislature supported the tax exclusion to be rolled out over of a period of years—10%, 15%, 25% and 50%.

After Malloy left office, Ned Lamont was invited to an ARTC luncheon along with Republican candidate Bob Stefanowski. Lamont stated that he would support keeping the defined benefit pension along with the tax exemption. Lamont has supported maintaining our pension, paying the full actuarial amount to the pension fund. **However, the Governor's budget proposal this year proposed continuing the extension of the 25% tax exclusion.**

ARTC was the only retired teacher organization that submitted testimony in protest to the Governor's budget on this extension, presenting arguments for the promised 50% CT exclusions. Thanks to ARTC's many members who wrote to the Finance and Bonding Committee as well as to their Legislators in support of the testimony, the 50% tax exclusion was passed into law. **Retired teachers will owe less CT income tax when filing their 2021 returns and enjoy more of their earned pension dollars thanks to ARTC.**

As you can see, it takes time, patience and persistence and the support of many retired teachers to achieve positive results. ARTC is a non-partisan, dues driven volunteer organization. Our strength is in member support. Please use a small sum of your tax exclusion dollars to join ARTC.

Cathy D'Agostino and Sandra Bove, ARTC Legislative Co-Chairs

DOLLARS SAVED AS A RESULT OF THE TAX EXEMPTIONS

Over the years, through efforts of the ARTC at the legislature, we have received a series of tax exemptions. Below are some of the examples of dollars saved. These examples assume an average annual taxable pension amount of \$58,406 and a 5% tax rate.

When the exemption was 10% you saved\$ 292.00

When the exemption was 25% you saved\$ 730.00

Now that the exemption is 50% you will save\$ 1460.00

Of course, your savings would be far greater as the amount of your pension increases.

With regard to the \$50 membership dues for ARTC, the amount of \$1460.00 from the above example is twenty-nine times that amount.

Are the \$50 annual dues worth the money?

Ed Messina
Immediate Past President of ARTC