

**The Retired Teachers of Ontario/
Les enseignantes et enseignants retraités de l'Ontario (RTO/ERO)**

Report of the Political Advocacy Committee (PAC) to the Annual Senate, October 25-26, 2016

Since Spring Senate, members of the Political Advocacy Committee (PAC) have continued to research and monitor a variety of issues, including:

- Genetically Modified Organisms
- Experimental Lakes Area
- Elder Abuse
- Local Health Integration Networks
- Automobile Insurance
- Seniors' Driving Test

The high cost of energy, hydro in particular, is a major concern of many RTO/ERO members and seniors in general. As a result, PAC, at its September 8, 2016 meeting, has taken it on as a primary issue. Since that meeting, there has been some movement on the part of the Provincial Government, but, nevertheless, hydro costs will remain on the Committee's watch list. There is almost daily media reporting on this evolving issue.

As reported in PAC's report to Spring Senate, the Committee identified the Patients First concept and Age Friendly Cities as its focal points for this year and likely into 2017. After extensively reviewing the Guide to the Advanced Health Links Model and the Patients First discussion paper, the Committee completed a detailed response, with recommendations aimed at assisting the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care in providing excellent services for Ontario seniors, including RTO/ERO's 74,000 members. The resulting advisory document was sent to the Provincial Executive for its use in future advocacy efforts with the Provincial Government.

PAC is very excited to be in a position to lead RTO/ERO's advocacy in support of age-friendly communities. The Committee is presently developing and piloting an action plan that can be disseminated to local PAC representatives for use in their communities. A major aspect of the plan is that it will be designed so that results can be measured. As previously reported, but repeated here for convenience:

Ten years ago, the World Health Organization (WHO) developed the Global Age-Friendly Cities Project, bringing together cities from around the world that were interested in supporting healthy aging by becoming more age-friendly. These cities performed audits by gathering information from various stakeholders interested in promoting age-friendly communities. From the information gathered, eight key domains of community life in which communities can become more age-friendly were identified:

- outdoor spaces and buildings;
- transportation;
- housing;
- social participation and recreation;
- respect and social inclusion;

- civic participation and employment;
- communication and information; and
- community support and health services.

These domains are eminently measurable. In addition, there are already Ontario communities that have achieved high levels of age-friendliness and have published detailed action plans. These communities will provide clear benchmarks as we encourage others to follow their lead.

Motion Referred to the Committee

A motion was referred from the Spring 2014 Senate meeting:

“THAT the RTO/ERO Political Advocacy Committee be directed to include in their 2015 budget proposal the costs associated with the production and distribution of a document(s) that provides an adequate overview of The Retired Teachers of Ontario (RTO/ERO) and the Canadian Association of Retired Teachers (ACER-CART) to include the policies, positions, community involvement and other relevant data for each organization for the use of local District Political Advocacy Committees during meetings with political contacts and other liaison organizations.”

PAC began the process of developing a document at its November 2014 meeting. A draft of a pamphlet was reviewed at PAC’s March 22, 2016 meeting. The Committee reviewed the draft document and suggested changes. An updated version was brought forward at the June 2016 PAC meeting and a final version was approved at the September 2016 meeting. The document will now be translated and produced for distribution.

PAC has requested budget allocation in order to hold a workshop for District PAC representatives in the autumn of 2017. Planning for the workshop is in the preliminary stages.

As always, PAC will continue to perform its role as an RTO/ERO sensor for identifying issues of potential concern to our members.

The committee extends its thanks to Martin Higgs, June Szeman, Jim Grieve, Simon Leibovitz, and Gail Knox for their input and support. We thank departing member Dennis Hill for his hard work on the committee during his tenure and welcome incoming member Louise Guérin.

Respectfully submitted,
Paul Brazeau, Chair

Committee Members:

Paul Brazeau	District 43, Nipissing
Wayne Grosvenor	District 41, Elgin
Dennis Hill	District 33, Chatham-Kent (term completed September 8)
Sharon Jones	District 5, Cochrane & Temiskaming
Denis Monnin	District 27, Ottawa-Carleton
June Szeman	Provincial Executive Liaison
Linda Taberner	District 28, Region of Durham
Mary Valtellini	District 23, North York