

# MTA REPORTER

**RETIREED** The Voice of MTA Retired Members

## RETIREED MEMBERS GATHERING TAKES ON CRITICAL ISSUES, HONOR OUR OWN AWARDS

Scott McLennan & Mary MacDonald



Left: Judy Babb and Craig Slatin. Babb won the Honor Our Own award in 2020. Slatin was one of two recipients in 2021. Right: participants at the Gathering discuss the MCAS exams. Photos by Scott McLennan and Jonathan Ng.

For the first time since 2019, the MTA Retired Members Gathering was held in person this year, generating enthusiasm for passing the Fair Share Amendment and recognizing those who have demonstrated an exceptional commitment to union activism.

Hosted by the Retired Members Committee, the event included workshops presented by MTA members that focused on issues including why ending the use of MCAS exams is important for public education, the impact of a wave of new union organizing taking place at large corporations, such as Amazon and Starbucks, and the social and political motivations that underlie the ongoing campaign to restrict reproductive rights.

The 21st annual MTA Retired Members Gathering was held on Sept. 29 at the DoubleTree by Hilton hotel in Westborough. As always, the presentation of the Honor Our Own award was a highlight of the event.

The award process begins with fellow members nominating retirees who have done outstanding and ongoing work for their locals and the MTA.

The 2022 Honor Our Own awards recognized Beverly Saccocia, a longtime Education Support Professional, and Mary Cowhey, retired from the Northampton school district.

Sadly, Saccocia died on Nov. 11. A complete obituary is available online. See [www.chapmanfuneral.com/obituaries/Beverly-A-Saccocia?obld=26346980](http://www.chapmanfuneral.com/obituaries/Beverly-A-Saccocia?obld=26346980).

At the Gathering, her award was accepted on her behalf by her daughter, Julie Saccocia-Augustine, and granddaughter, Vanessa Augustine.

The Gathering also recognized Honor Our Own recipients who received the award in previous years, but who were unable to attend in person due to the ongoing pandemic.

Judy Babb, who won the award in 2020, and Craig Slatin, who won the award along with Richard Liston in 2021, were also acknowledged in person this year.

## RETIREED MEMBERS COMMITTEE 2022-2023

### CHAIR

Patrick Patterson, Ipswich

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Seth Evans, Brookline  
\*\* Kip Fonsh, Leverett  
\* Shelly Fraser, Framingham  
Ora Gladstone, Boston  
Kathy Greeley, Cambridge  
\*\* Joseph Herosy, Quincy  
\*\* Andrei Joseph, Chestnut Hill  
Rick Last, Northampton  
Dale Melcher, Northampton  
Rafael Moure-Eraso, Medford  
\*\*\*\* Bernadette Murphy, Roslindale  
Phyllis Neufeld, Burlington  
\*\*\* Robin Smith, Springfield

### RETIREED MEMBERS ORGANIZER

Robert Whalen  
[rwhalen@massteacher.org](mailto:rwhalen@massteacher.org)  
617.878.8206 ■ 800.392.6175, ext. 8206

### FIELD & ORGANIZING COORDINATOR

Renee Gatewood  
[rgatewood@massteacher.org](mailto:rgatewood@massteacher.org)  
617.878.8208 ■ 800.392.6175, ext. 8208

### MASSACHUSETTS TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

2 Heritage Drive, 8th Floor  
Quincy, MA 02171-2119  
800.392.6175 ■ [www.massteacher.org](http://www.massteacher.org)

### MTA MEMBER BENEFITS, INC.

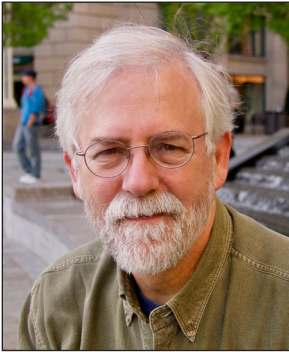
800.336.0990 ■ [www.mtabenefits.com](http://www.mtabenefits.com)

### MTA MEMBERSHIP DIVISION

617.878.8118 ■ 800.392.6175, ext. 8118

- \* Elected by the Board
- \*\* MTA Board of Directors
- \*\*\* President's Designee
- \*\*\*\* Appointed Active Member

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



MTA RMC Chair Patrick Patterson

Both Question 1, the Fair Share Amendment, and Question 4, which will enable residents regardless of immigration status to get a driver's license, have passed. A broad coalition worked to get these ballot questions approved by voters and coalition members are to be congratulated and thanked.

The money that will now be available with the passage of Question 1 will make it possible for the state to provide additional funds to improve public education, in kindergarten through high school, as well as at public colleges and universities.

The money also will go to repair and maintenance of the state's degraded transportation system, which will improve its safety and efficiency. But the passage of Question 4, by including our neighbors in the right to apply for a driver's license, also will increase the safety of transportation.

One can't help but compare the results on Question 1 with the No on 2 Campaign. The former was close; the latter was not. Those who follow referendums closely have noted that it is more difficult to change something than it is to leave it the same. Another point, however, is one I raised in my last message. The Fair Share Amendment offers a different model of taxation: rather than all residents being taxed at the same rate, those who have more should pay more. And that may explain, in part, the narrow margin of the Nov. 8 vote.

Implementation of the constitutional amendment now moves to the Legislature. A grassroots campaign, similar to the one that pushed for passage of Question 1, now needs

to be directed at the State House.

In late September, the 2022 Retired Members Gathering was held. This was the first in-person meeting of Retired members since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020. We made the difficult decision to make the event this year in person, and required that people be tested for the coronavirus, and masked to protect attendees.

At the Sept. 29 event, we were able to acknowledge the 2020 and 2021 recipients of the Honor Our Own Award: Judy Babb, who was recognized in 2020 virtually, and Craig Slatin and Richard Liston, who each were honored virtually in 2021. The 2022 honorees were Mary Cowhey and Beverly Saccocia. Because neither could attend the event, the awards were accepted on their behalf by Dale Melcher, who had nominated Cowhey for the honor, and by Saccocia's daughter, Julie Saccocia-Augustine, and her granddaughter, Vanessa Augustine.

The workshops offered at the Gathering were well received and there is a brief summary of each in this issue of the MTA Reporter. Attendance was disappointing, however, down to less than half of what it has been previously. Part of the reason was obviously because of the ongoing pandemic. Our age group is one that has suffered among the most with COVID-19, and people remain cautious about participating in public, indoor events.

We have begun to plan for the Spring Brunches, which are scheduled around the time of the Annual Meeting of Delegates each spring. The Annual Meeting is scheduled for April 28 and 29, 2023. Given the lowered attendance at the Gathering, and the persistence of the pandemic, the Retired Members Committee has decided to return to a virtual format for the Brunches. Details of the event will be provided in the next *MTA Reporter*. ■

## MAGAZINE DISCOUNTS THROUGH MTA BENEFITS

Using a smartphone is a convenient way to read about the latest news and trends but print reading options remain in demand. MTA Magazine Service offers amazing discounts on digital and print magazine subscriptions, so you can choose how you would like to stay entertained and informed.

Magazines that cover topics such as adventure, environmentalism and culture were among some of the most popular selections in 2022. *Outside* is a perfect selection for active adults and is offered to MTA members at 33 percent off the retail price. For the scientifically inclined, *Archaeology* is a great option, and can be purchased at 50 percent off the retail

price. Looking for an even bigger discount? If you're interested in the arts and news analysis, subscribe to *The New Yorker* at 72 percent off the retail price.

In addition to some of these great discounts, members get two free magazine subscriptions. Choose from titles including *Wine Enthusiast*, *Story Monster's Ink* and the best-seller, *Women's Health*. After browsing through MTA Magazine Service selections, members will quickly realize that there is something for everyone. There is no better time to start or renew a subscription or gift someone a subscription! Learn more about this exclusive service at [mtabenefits.com/magazines](http://mtabenefits.com/magazines). ■

## ELECTION OPPORTUNITIES FOR MTA RETIRED MEMBERS

### An overview

Our union's strength comes from full participation of all members, including retirees, in MTA and NEA election processes at the local, state and national levels. Please consider the following opportunities to engage the democratic processes of our union. Share with other retirees, and let's grow union power.

The election and nomination process for the seats described here are subject to MTA Bylaws and to MTA Policy/Procedures for Nominations and Elections, all of which are available upon request from the MTA Division of Governance.

### Statewide Retired Executive Committee Member

The Executive Committee seat representing the Statewide Retired Region will be up for election. The Executive Committee, along with the Board, is a governing body of the MTA, with various responsibilities including real estate, finance and personnel oversight and decision making. Executive Committee members automatically also serve on the MTA Board of Directors, which has control of the affairs of the Association, except when the delegates are in session. The term is for three years, beginning July 1, 2023. Candidates must be members of the Statewide Retired District. There is a self-nomination process, with a deadline of March 3, 2023. The election will take place at the 2023 MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates, voted on by the retired delegates.

Those wishing to run for this seat should submit a self-nominating letter no later than 5 p.m. on the first Friday in March, specifying the candidate's name and address and the office being sought. The letter should be addressed to Executive Director-Treasurer, MTA, 2 Heritage Drive, 8th Floor, Quincy, MA 02171-2119, and may be faxed to 617-570-4908 or emailed to [MTAGovernance@massteacher.org](mailto:MTAGovernance@massteacher.org).

### MTA Retired Delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly

The 2023 NEA Representative Assembly (NEA-RA) is scheduled for July 2 through July 6, in Orlando, Florida. This is the meeting of representatives from all NEA state associations and is the world's largest democratic deliberative assembly! At this meeting, delegates debate the vital issues that impact American public education and set Association policy and activities for the year ahead. It is an opportunity for democratic engagement and making

### Available Opportunities for MTA Retired Members:

- *Statewide Retired Executive Committee Member*
- *MTA Retired Delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly\**
- *Statewide Retired District and Retired Ethnic Minority Delegates to the MTA Annual Meeting\**
- *MTA Retired Members Committee\**

*\*Nomination forms available online at [www.massteacher.org/nomform](http://www.massteacher.org/nomform)*

national connections to build our movement and strength.

Elected NEA-RA retired delegates are always strongly encouraged to attend the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting, typically held immediately before the NEA-RA. Information will be sent to all the elected delegates, and MTA will reimburse additional hotel and meal expenses for attending this meeting.

NEA will allocate the number of retired delegate seats to the NEA-RA for Massachusetts based on membership figures in January. MTA/NEA retired members are eligible to run in the NEA Retired category for the seats allocated by NEA. Nominations are open to all eligible MTA/NEA retired members through a self-nomination process. These delegates will be elected by ballots provided to retired members in February.

MTA provides funding for travel expenses to the winners of the MTA Statewide, Regional, and Retired elections to the NEA-RA, up to \$1,600 per delegate, subject to accountability requirements and reimbursement guidelines.

Those interested can access the online nomination form at [massteacher.org/nomform](http://massteacher.org/nomform). The nomination deadline is Friday, January 13, 2023, at 5 p.m.

### Statewide Retired District Delegates and Retired Ethnic Minority Delegates to the MTA Annual Meeting

The 2023 Annual Meeting of Delegates is scheduled for April 28 and 29 at the MassMutual Center in Springfield.

» *continued on PG 4*

## ELECTION OPPORTUNITIES FOR MTA RETIRED MEMBERS *Continued*

In this meeting, delegates from across the state gather to vote on policies and set the direction for the MTA in the year ahead. Your voice matters.

The Statewide Retired District Delegates will be elected by ballot provided to the retired membership in conjunction with the NEA delegate/director elections in February. Nominations are open to all eligible MTA/NEA retired members through a self-nomination process. The 2023 allocation of retired delegates seats will be based on the number of MTA/NEA retired members as of January 15.

In addition, due to a Bylaw change at the 2022 Annual Meeting, there is now an allocation of two ethnic minority delegate seats for the Statewide Retired District. As with the districts among the active membership, this allocation is equal to the number of seats per district on the MTA Board of Directors. Election of these seats will be held concurrent with the other retired delegate seats mentioned in this article. Retired members may run for Annual Meeting delegate seats in both categories, and if elected to both, must notify MTA which seat they intend to fill.

All retired delegates to the Annual Meeting may apply for reimbursement of certain travel expenses incurred to attend Annual Meeting, up to \$450.

Those interested can access the online nomination form at [massteacher.org/nomform](http://massteacher.org/nomform). The nomination deadline is Friday, January 13, 2023, at 5 p.m.

### MTA Retired Members Committee

Four members of the Retired Members Committee will be elected by the Statewide Retired District Delegates at the 2023 Annual Meeting. This committee plans the statewide retiree conference and serves as an important voice of retirees within the MTA. The committee seats have terms

*Please note that paper forms are available in this issue of the MTA Reporter, but we strongly encourage you to use the online nomination forms at [www.massteacher.org/nomform](http://www.massteacher.org/nomform)*

of two years, starting July 1, 2023.

Those interested can access the online nomination form at [massteacher.org/nomform](http://massteacher.org/nomform). The nomination deadline is Friday, March 3, 2023, at 5 p.m.

### Election Waiver

MTA's election waiver policy applies to the elections described in this issue. If the number of candidates is equal to or less than the number of positions to be filled, the election(s) may be waived and the candidates declared elected to the position(s) in question.

### Nomination and Election Details Now on the MTA Website

In addition to the information published here and in the Fall issue of *MTA Today*, all MTA and NEA election information may be accessed at the MTA website: [www.massteacher.org/2023Governance](http://www.massteacher.org/2023Governance).

### MTA Retired Elections Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding the nomination or election process, please feel free to contact Governance Specialist John Connelly at [jconnelly@massteacher.org](mailto:jconnelly@massteacher.org).

The chair of the Retired Members Committee is also available to assist you with information on election opportunities available to retired members and the election process. Chair Patrick Patterson can be reached at [ppattmwilk@mac.com](mailto:ppattmwilk@mac.com). ■

## NEW BYLAW CREATES RETIRED DELEGATE SEATS REPRESENTING MINORITY MEMBERS

### Andrei Joseph

**S**purred by an initiative of the Retired Members Committee, the 2022 Annual Meeting of Delegates approved a new bylaw allocating two additional Retired Delegate seats to annual meeting, specifically reserved for the representation of ethnic minority retired members. This will bring the retired membership into alignment with active members who already have had a minority delegate seat allotment for each district.

Retirees seeking to represent the ethnic minority membership will be able to run for BOTH of these dedicated seats and the at-large openings. If successful in both elections, the member will choose which seat to fill and resign from the other. The remaining opening would be filled by the next alternate in line. ■

# RETIRED MEMBERS COMMITTEE

## 2023 NOMINATION FORM

This nomination form must be received by 5 PM on Friday, **MARCH 3, 2023**, regardless of postmark.

**AN ONLINE SELF-NOMINATION FORM IS AVAILABLE AT [MASSTEACHER.ORG/NOMFORM](https://www.massteacher.org/nomform)**

**WE ENCOURAGE CANDIDATES TO UTILIZE THE ONLINE FORM (or this paper form may be submitted).**

ADDITIONAL FORMS MAY BE REQUESTED OR THIS FORM MAY BE DUPLICATED. FORMS MAY BE FAXED TO:  
**JOHN CONNELLY, 617-570-4908, OR MAILED TO THE ADDRESS BELOW.**

NAME OF CANDIDATE \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBER ID (listed on your MTA ID Card) \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

HOME ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

**Please check the appropriate box.**

**Membership Type:**

Retired     Retired Life

**I hereby declare my candidacy for:**

Retired Members Committee

### BIO/STATEMENT GRID – PLEASE PRINT – OR TYPE ONTO ONLINE FORM


### INSTRUCTIONS

- MTA POLICY:** Each candidate may submit a biography/statement grid containing no more than 50 words.  
**Note:** Only the first fifty (50) words will be printed. **The Credentials & Ballot Committee reserves the right to edit the bios.**
  - WRITE OUT** your statement on a separate piece of paper first, and then fill out the grid.
  - TYPE OR PRINT** clearly, using both upper and lower-case letters, as you expect your final statement to appear.
  - INSERT** only **one word** per box.
  - DO NOT combine words or numbers with hyphens or slashes.**
  - “AN,” “A” and “THE” constitute one word.
  - ACRONYMS** such as “NEA-RA” or “MTA” count as one word.
  - INSERT PUNCTUATION** in the **same box** immediately after the word you want it to follow.
  - A DATE** represented as “October 1, 2006” shall constitute three words. A date represented as “10/1/06” is only one word
  - Send this entire nomination form to: MTA, Governance Specialist, 2 Heritage Drive, 8th Floor, Quincy, MA 02171-2119. This form must be received by **Friday, March 3, 2023, regardless of postmark**, in order for the bio/statement to be published in the April *MTA REPORTER*.
- Please send me a list of Statewide Retired delegates to the **2023** MTA Annual Meeting, which I will use solely for the purpose of publicizing my candidacy for election as a member of the Retired Members Committee.

My qualifications are in compliance with those of the designated position for which I am a candidate.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**ONLINE NOMINATION FORMS  
AVAILABLE AT**

**[WWW.MASSTEACHER.ORG/NOMFORM](http://WWW.MASSTEACHER.ORG/NOMFORM)**

# 2023 NOMINATIONS

Delegates to the NEA RA | Regional and Retired Ethnic Minority Delegates to the MTA Annual Meeting | Statewide Retired District Delegates to the MTA Annual Meeting  
A candidate must file a nomination form with the Executive Director-Treasurer by 5 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 13, 2023, regardless of postmark.

**WE ENCOURAGE CANDIDATES TO UTILIZE  
THE ONLINE FORM AVAILABLE AT**

**MASSTEACHER.ORG/NOMFORM**  
*(or this paper form may be submitted).*

NAME OF CANDIDATE: \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBER ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

PERSONAL EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

LOCAL ASSOCIATION (leave blank if retired): \_\_\_\_\_

DISTRICT/REGION/RETIRED: \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE CHECK THE BOX TO INDICATE THE ELECTED POSITION YOU ARE SEEKING**

**CANDIDATE MUST FILL OUT A SEPARATE NOMINATION FORM FOR EACH POSITION SOUGHT. Please check one box only.**

- Retired Delegate to MTA Annual Meeting
- Regional Ethnic Minority Delegate to MTA Annual Meeting\*
- Retired Ethnic Minority Delegate to MTA Annual Meeting\*
- Regional Delegate to NEA RA
- Statewide, Non-Supervisor Delegate to NEA RA
- Statewide, Supervisor Delegate to NEA RA
- Retired Delegate to NEA RA

**Position/Membership Status**

- Teacher or Education Support Professional
- Administrator or Supervisor
- Retired Member

**\*Candidates for Ethnic Minority Delegate to Annual Meeting, please indicate your ethnic minority designation:**

- Black or African American
- Hispanic
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Asian
- Cape Verdean

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. **MTA Policy:** Each candidate may submit by the deadline a headshot photograph and biography/ statement containing no more than 50 words. Note: Only the first 50 words will be printed. *The Credentials and Ballot Committee reserves the right to edit all bios.*
2. Write out your statement on a separate piece of paper first, and then fill out the grid.
3. Type or print clearly, using both upper- and lower-case letters, as you expect the final statement to appear.
4. Insert only one word per box.
5. Do not combine words or numbers with hyphens or slashes.
6. "An," "a" and "the" constitute one word.
7. Abbreviations such as "NEA-RA" and "MTA" count as one word.
8. Insert punctuation in the same box immediately after the word that you want it to follow.
9. A date represented as "October 1, 2019" shall constitute three words. The same date represented as "10/1/19" is only one word.
10. Send this entire nomination form and photo to: MTA Governance and Administration Division, 2 Heritage Drive, 8th Floor, Quincy, MA 02171-2119. Only submissions received by Jan. 13, 2023, will be published with the ballot. A photo the MTA has used within 2 years may be reused.

**BIO/STATEMENT GRID — PLEASE PRINT — OR UTILIZE THE ONLINE FORM AT [MASSTEACHER.ORG/NOMFORM](https://www.massteacher.org/nomform)**


**PLEASE SELECT FROM THE FOLLOWING AND CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOXES:**

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 50-word (maximum) bio/statement grid enclosed. | <input type="checkbox"/> I have emailed a photo to <a href="mailto:jconnelly@massteacher.org">jconnelly@massteacher.org</a> (high-resolution JPEG – 300 dpi). | <input type="checkbox"/> Use my 2021 or 2022 photo.** |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am not submitting a bio/statement grid.      | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo enclosed.  | <input type="checkbox"/> I am not submitting a photo. |
- \*\*MTA can only use past photos if published for 2021 or 2022 elections

**My qualifications are in accordance with those of the designated position for which I am a candidate:**

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDITIONAL FORMS MAY BE REQUESTED OR THIS FORM MAY BE DUPLICATED. FORMS MAY BE FAXED TO JOHN CONNELLY AT 617.570.4908.

**ONLINE NOMINATION FORMS  
AVAILABLE AT**

**[WWW.MASSTEACHER.ORG/NOMFORM](http://WWW.MASSTEACHER.ORG/NOMFORM)**



## 2022 RETIRED MEMBERS GATHERING *Continued*

### Bigger Than Dobbs: The Socialist, Feminist Politics of Reproductive Justice

*Presented by Michelle Corbin, associate professor of sociology, Worcester State University*

*Presentation summary provided by RMC member Andrei Joseph*

One development at the Retired Members Gatherings has been to turn to the expertise of our MTA members to provide more presentations. A recent example of this was a workshop by Michelle Corbin, Ph.D., an associate professor of sociology at Worcester State, who examined the recent Supreme Court decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

While acknowledging the cultural, indeed the misogynist, aspects of the decision, Corbin presented a sharp, persuasive argument that the primary paradigm of the decision was rooted in the capitalist class need for labor. Corbin traced the historical record of legislation alternately regulating — and not regulating — abortion and access to birth control as the fertility rate has declined over the last century or more.

In the absence of the support that many European countries offer — paid family leave, affordable childcare, universal health care — many women have chosen work over having children. When seen through the lens of social reproduction, reproductive justice becomes a fundamental human right. Corbin’s presentation was received with rapt attention and broad support.

### Making the Most of the Moment: New Waves of Union Organizing

*Presented by Clare Hammonds, professor of practice, Labor Center, UMass Amherst*

*Presentation summary provided by RMC member Dale Melcher*

In this lively and deeply conversational workshop, members looked at the new wave of organizing success in large, decentralized companies — Starbucks, Amazon, Trader Joe’s — and explored the strategies and tactics that made them successful and distinguished them from more traditional organizing methods. Members identified current social movements — around climate change, anti-racism, LGBTQ+ and immigrant rights — as places where young organizers learned organizing skills and tactics. Our takeaways: Change doesn’t follow a straight and methodical path; We have to question our understanding of how organizing happens and be open to doing things differently; Successful campaigns center on worker participation; and connections with other social movements are key.

### Honor Our Own Award recipients



*Beverly Saccocia*



*Mary Cowhey*

### How the MCAS is Destroying Public Education and What You Can Do About It

*Kathy Greeley, MTA Retired Members Committee member, Ricardo Rosa, MTA director of training and professional learning, and Deb McCarthy, MTA vice president*

*Presentation summary provided by RMC member Kathy Greeley*

The MCAS is more than just an annoying standardized test. It is the head of the spear that the enemies of public education are using to undermine our schools, especially in communities of color. Members began the workshop with each participant sharing a word or phrase that came to mind when they thought of the MCAS. It was not a pretty picture! Words included “stressful,” “waste of time,” “unfair,” “cruel,” “racist” and “anti-democratic.” Greeley, a retired Cambridge educator and Retired Members Committee member, presented a brief overview of the history of education reform. Greeley included the 1983 national report “A Nation at Risk,” the 1993 Massachusetts Education Reform Act that first introduced the MCAS, the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act, which required 100% proficiency, Race to the Top, the debate around the PARCC vs. MCAS which led to “MCAS 2.0,” and the most recent egregious act of the Board of Education — raising cut-off scores for graduation as public schools have battled an historic pandemic.

Rosa, director of MTA’s Training and Professional Learning Division, addressed the deeply racist nature of standardized testing, going as far back as the eugenics movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries when white supremacists used these flawed tests to justify their oppression of and discrimination against people of color. He also pointed out

*» continued on PG 10*

## 2022 RETIRED MEMBERS GATHERING *Continued*

how the MCAS has been used to label schools as “failing” or “underperforming” primarily in poor and working-class communities that have been underfunded for years.

McCarthy, MTA vice president, spoke of her moral outrage about the test and her decision to take a personal stand against it. Despite the threats and pressures on her to capitulate, McCarthy stood her ground and has inspired other educators to join her as conscientious resisters.

What can retirees do about the MCAS? Participants pointed out that retired educators are in a unique position because they know just how much this one-size-fits-all, high-stakes test has hurt rather than helped students and schools. Retired members have witnessed this change over time that many younger educators and parents have not. They can speak out and share their perspective and experiences without fear of being threatened or bullied by administrators (as, sadly, many educators have been). Retirees also cannot be accused of operating out of self-interest (as, sadly again, many educators have been).

The MTA is working with a statewide coalition to end high-stakes testing through development of both legislative and grassroots strategies. If you are interested in joining these efforts, contact Rosa at [rosa@massteacher.org](mailto:rosa@massteacher.org).

### Legislative Issues and the Need for Change at the State House

*Presented by state Representative Erika Uytterhoeven, D-Somerville*

*Presentation summary provided by RMC member Patrick Patterson*

Uytterhoeven is beginning her second term as the state representative for Somerville. She overwhelmingly won in the Democratic primary and was recently re-elected to her second term in the general election.

Uytterhoeven began the presentation by stating her firm commitment to taxing the rich, abolition of the carceral state and defending and funding public schools and institutions.

She began by documenting the growing inequality of wealth. The 40-year period of neoliberalism, starting in 1980, has seen a growth of income inequality in which the wealthy have captured the lion's share of the value generated by increases in productivity. The skewed distribution in wealth extends to state and local taxes: only two states out of 50 have cut taxes more than Massachusetts and most of the cuts have benefited the rich. As a percentage of income, the wealthy pay a third less than the less well off.

The recently approved Fair Share Amendment begins to address the inequality in taxation, but it remains to be seen exactly how the Legislature will enact it.

Uytterhoeven provided a number of examples of failures: Funding of public higher education in Massachusetts has dropped by a third since 2001; the second-fastest growth in student debt; and tuition and fees are among the highest in the nation. The recent increase in the COLA failed to substantively address the increase in the cost of living. The Legislature has failed to address the unfunded liabilities as promised back in the 1970s and continues to underfund the

*» continued on PG 11*



*Photo by Scott McLennan*



*Photo by Jonathan Ng*

*Left: State Representative Erika Uytterhoeven presenting her workshop, “Legislative Issues and the Need for Change at the State House.”  
Right: Participants discussing during the workshop “How the MCAS is Destroying Public Education and What You Can Do About It.”*

## REPORT FROM THE BOARD – NOVEMBER 2022

### Andrei Joseph



MTA RMC Member Andrei Joseph

**W**e did it! Supported by the efforts of thousands of our members, the coalition the MTA helped build and fund was successful in passing Question 1, the Fair Share Amendment. This constitutional amendment will now require those who make more than \$1 million dollars a year in annual taxable income to pay an additional 4 percent tax. This victory will produce up to \$2 billion dollars each year for public education and transportation.

Retired members were the very first group to join the campaign. Many months ago, with the assistance of MTA staff, we made the first series of phone calls to support Question 1. Despite the caution required by COVID-19, retired members continued to participate in phone banks, hand out literature at farmer's markets, provide information at tables at local events and canvass neighborhoods across the state.

This grassroots campaign was made possible by earlier decisions by the MTA Board of Directors to move money from reserves to support Question 1. A handful of board members opposed such funding, arguing mostly that the substantial expenditure involved should require approval from the Annual Meeting of Delegates. But the majority of board members saw wisdom in an earlier commitment

that would allow us to “get ahead” with our message to the public, as well as lead to financial contributions from the NEA and our coalition allies. This proved to be true. I supported both the early commitment and subsequent supplementary expenditures.

The other major issue considered by the board was how to support our courageous local members in Malden and Haverhill in their determined efforts to reach fair contracts. Chapter 150E, Section 9A of Massachusetts law prohibits strikes and declares “... no employee organization shall induce, encourage or condone any strike, work stoppage, slowdown or withholding of services by such public employees.” Nonetheless, both the Malden and Haverhill locals voted to strike. Their creative demands went beyond pay raises to include smaller classes, paid family medical leave, robust increases for Education Support Professionals and attempts to increase affordable housing in their communities. As the Commonwealth Employment Relations Board imposed fines on the Haverhill local, as well as our state organization, we held firm. The locals emerged victorious with significant improvements in both contracts.

Briefly noted: we handled the tasks of replacing retired MTA staff as well as electing representatives to the MTA Benefits Board. We are continuing our political education on the Friday nights of board meetings. The last presentation by Dean Robinson, a professor of political science at UMass Amherst, and Colin Jones, senior policy analyst at the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, examined the nature of class/race intersectionality. ■

## 2022 RETIRED MEMBERS GATHERING *Continued*

pension system. Finally, it has not restored the right to strike, a fundamental right of labor, or abolish the punitive use of the MCAS and MTEL exams.

There needs to be accountability led by constituents, i.e., union members and the public. Demands need to be directly addressed to legislators to take a concrete and verifiable action. One-off emails or phone calls, lobby days where a group of union members or activists go to the state house to talk usually to legislative staff, rallies at

the State House steps simply don't apply pressure. Clear demands need to be made by constituents and a repeated follow-up to see if the legislator has followed through in support of the demand. And if they fail to follow through on the demand, they need to be held accountable at the ballot box.

The presentation provided much food for thought, especially in view of the battle that is about to begin to implement the Fair Share Amendment. ■



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# MTA **REPORTER**

**RETIRED** *The Voice of MTA Retired Members*

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