

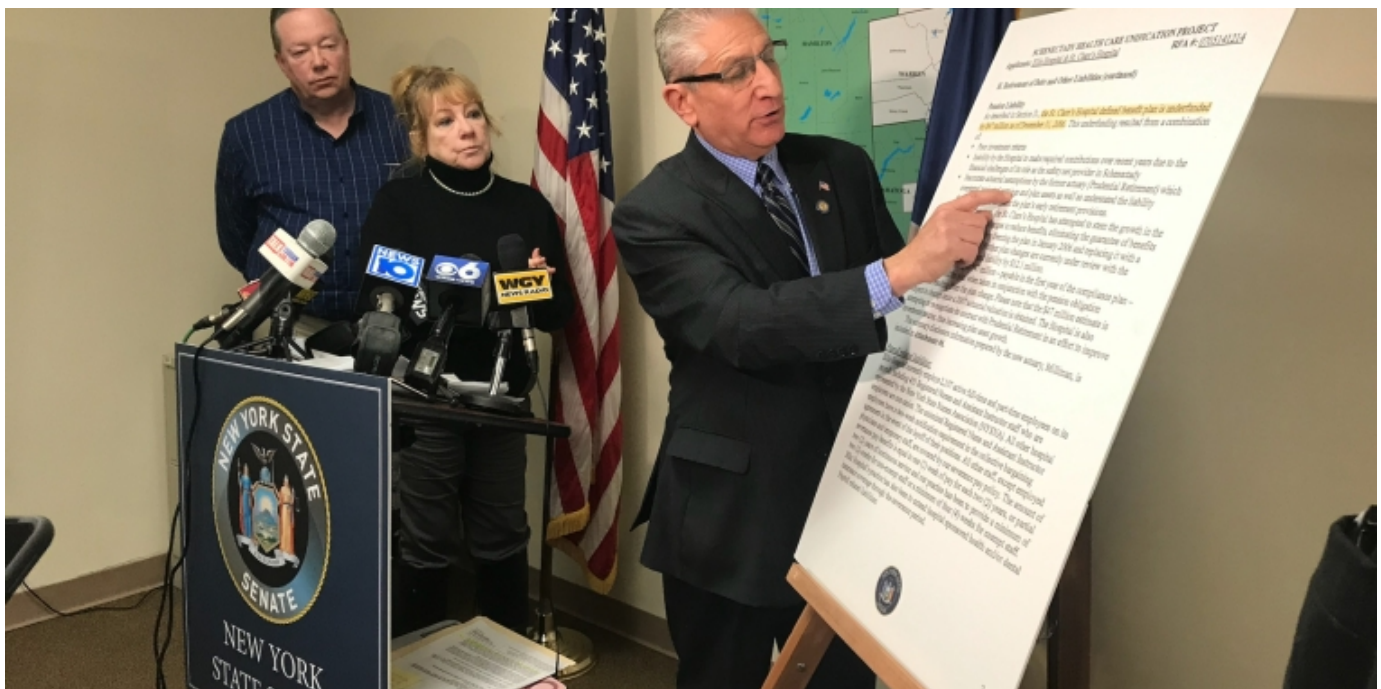


NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Tedisco

## Hartshorne, Tedisco, Santabarbara Seek to Help St. Clare's Hospital Retirees in a letter to Governor Hochul

SENATOR JIM TEDISCO September 17, 2021



Senator Jim Tedisco and Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara today are again joining forces in a bipartisan effort to find common ground for the common good in government. Today, Tedisco and Santabarbara are urging Governor Kathy Hochul to help the more than 1,100 retired health care workers of the now-shuttered St. Clare's Hospital in Schenectady who lost some or all of their pensions through no fault of their own.

Tedisco and Santabarbara have joined with St. Clare's Pensioners Recovery Alliance Chair Mary Hartshorne to pen a letter (see attached) to Governor Hochul asking for a meeting and for her to give a fresh look to helping address the dire economic situation of these retirees.

Since late 2018, Tedisco, Santabarbara and the pensioners have repeatedly tried to contact former Governor Cuomo, but he refused to meet with them or respond in any way to their concerns, even feinting ignorance about the issue when asked during a press conference.

"As Governor Hochul vows to restore trust in government and foster a culture of greater transparency, we respectfully request that she give us and Mary Hartshorne, the leader of the St. Clare's Pensioners Recovery Alliance, a few minutes of her time to listen to the concerns of the pensioners, who have seen their life savings disappear through no fault of their own with the snap of a finger. Today, I'm joining with my colleague Assemblyman Santabarbara in a bi-partisan effort to reach out to our new governor who I hope can meet with us and give this a fresh look so we can find common ground for the common good of our constituents." said Senator Jim Tedisco.

"Sadly, more than 1,100 retirees of the former St. Clare's Hospital in Schenectady were told that they would no longer receive their pensions back in 2018, and during these challenging times they continue to face dire financial straits to say the least," said Assemblyman Santabarbara. "These dedicated men and women that cared for some of our most vulnerable have now watched their savings vanish under circumstances beyond their control. Through the pandemic we have seen first-hand just how important the hardworking people in healthcare are to our community and I'm hopeful that our new Governor will give them the consideration they deserve and work with us to find a solution."

"On October 18, 2018, St. Clare's pensioners were sent a letter that devastated them: Their well-deserved pensions were scheduled to abruptly end with no discussion or input from any

of the pensioners. My fellow St. Clare's health care workers all gave their hearts when taking care of patients when they were at their most vulnerable. Our St. Clare's retirees deserve their pensions they worked so hard to earn. I join Senator Tedisco and Assemblyman Santabarbara to respectfully request that our new Governor, Kathy Hochul, please take a few minutes out of her busy schedule to listen to us and help these 1100+ health care workers through one of the toughest times in their lives," said Mary Hartshorne, Chair of the St. Clare's Pension Recovery Alliance.

**Background:**

St. Clare's Hospital was closed over a decade ago by a requirement of the state's Berger Commission in its mission to right-size New York's health care facilities, and its operations were absorbed by Ellis Medicine. At the time, the state provided a level of funding which was not commensurate with the level of need. Unfortunately, for reasons not yet fully identified, that was not enough to cover the St. Clare's pension fund's costs. Since federal law permits a religious exemption, the St. Clare's pension fund has no benefit guarantee insurance. These 1,100-plus New Yorkers, who cared for some of the most vulnerable, have been coping with economic uncertainty and desperation with no end in sight. This pandemic has made their economic situations even more precarious.

Earlier this year, Congress passed the \$1.9 trillion federal COVID stimulus relief bill that created an \$86 billion carve-out to help many workers secure their failing pension plans, but left behind the struggling St. Clare's Hospital pensioners.