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For: Upcoming ETA Newsletter

Happy New Year to our members! There certainly has been a plethora of news about public education these past few weeks (months and years, too!). Since most of us bury our heads, souls, and hearts into our classrooms, staying abreast on the most important information is hard to do. Below is an attempt to highlight some of these headlines:

- “President-elect Trump is going to be the best thing that ever happened for school choice and the charter school movement.” –former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani
- **November 7, 2017**—yes, 10 months from now—you will find a question on your ballot regarding a New York State Constitutional Convention:
 - “*Shall there be a convention to revise the constitution and amend the same?*” (NY Const. Art. XIX, Sec. 2).
 - Every 20 years, this question is placed on our ballots. Nine times have New York residents voted to open up a convention. If the masses vote “No”, then the issue halts there. If New Yorkers vote “Yes,” then begins the potentially lengthy process.
 - November 7, 2017—Initial vote. If “YES,” then...
 - November 6, 2018—We, the People, vote for the delegates (*Who do you want to send to the convention?*). These delegates have been campaigning in the months leading up to Nov. 2018
 - April 2, 2019—Delegates attend the convention and begin discussions/debates.
 - *As early as* November 5, 2019—All registered NYS voters will be asked to ratify (or not) the newly drafted New York State Constitution (reject or amend the amendments).
 - NYSUT is encouraging its members to mobilize in 2017 to block the opening of a convention. Why?
 - The constitution safeguards the right to a free public education, guarantees pension benefits, and the right to unionize/organize
 - Estimated cost of a convention: \$300 million (according to the League of Women Voters)
 - “The Blaine Amendment”
 - Article XI: Education
 - Establishes a Board of Regents
 - Article V: NYS employee pensions are a contractual relationship
- There are a number of *Friedrichs* look-a-like cases heading to the Supreme Court in the near future. The President-Elect will most certainly nominate a conservative nominee (Senator Schumer says he will attempt to oppose *any* Supreme Court nominee for the next 4 years...) that will tip the court into a conservative era
 - “Agency fees” will be cut if a *Friedrichs*-type case is overruled, severely crippling the legal and lobbying power of ANY union, including NYSUT, AFT, and NEA—to name a few.
- The Buffalo BOE is retaining lawyer to remove Paladino; BOE cites Paladino violated DASA

- NYS Assembly Speaker, Carl Heastie, called for increased funding for high-needs schools. While this will largely benefit NYC (30% of the NYC school funding relies on this), many are praising Heastie for highlighting the need to fund public schools (rather than focusing solely on SUNY schools). High-needs schools throughout WNY will likely benefit if the so-called "Foundation Aid" becomes reality.

As always, our students, communities, and careers need strong advocates to hold people in power accountable. While it may be difficult to attend a Niagara Square rally or organize peaceful march-in, you do have the power to comminute. Share these notes though conversation, Facebook, Twitter (Trump does!), online petitions, and NYSUT's own