

Fios Gigabit Connection.
fios

Fios Gigabit Connection Triple Play with TV and Phone
HBO® for 24 months
OR
Multi-Room DVR service for 2 years.

\$69.99/mo
for 1 yr. \$74.99/mo yr 2, w/2-yr agmt. plus taxes, REGN, FDM, other fees & \$12/mo. STB equip. charge. Online Only. Employee discount included. Up to 940 Mbps download & 880 Mbps upload. GetFios >

WORK FOR NYC? CHOOSE METROPLUS GOLD HEALTH PLAN.
2016 copays for in-network services, except Emergency Room (\$150, but waived if admitted) - MCT 12/12/16

**\$0 PREMIUM
\$0 COPAYS*
\$0 DEDUCTIBLE**

http://thechiefleader.com/news/news_of_the_week/uft-head-constitutional-convention-a-threat-to-key-employee-benefits/article_7acab1f2-a2cb-11e7-bef0-dbd54e47ac45.html

Pensions, Health Care Could Be Jeopardized

UFT Head: Constitutional Convention A Threat to Key Employee Benefits

By CRYSTAL LEWIS 17 hrs ago



RISK NOT WORTH REWARD: United Federation of Teachers President Michael Mulgrew spoke on behalf of a coalition of organizations urging New Yorkers to vote against a constitutional convention issue on the Election Day ballot, arguing it could wreak havoc with long-held rights.

The Chief Leader/Deborah White

United Federation of Teachers President Michael Mulgrew, flanked by a coalition of activists and labor organizers, called a Constitutional Convention “a wolf in sheep’s clothing” during an Oct. 11 press conference aimed at encouraging New Yorkers to vote against the Election Day proposition.

The question—“Should there be a convention to revise the constitution and amend the same?”—will appear on the ballots for the Nov. 7 election.

Would Expose Key Rights

Every 20 years, voters can choose to open the New York State Constitution for revision, leading to a Constitutional Convention that takes place two years after the vote. The state constitution offers protections for rights such as pensions, health care and public education, all of which could be altered or eliminated as part of the process.

A Siena College poll published Oct. 6 showed 44 percent of those surveyed said they would vote ‘yes’ to support a Constitutional Convention, while 39 percent opposed the measure.

But several labor leaders have strongly voiced opposition to holding a Constitutional Convention, including Teamsters Local 237 President Gregory Floyd and AFL-CIO New York City Central Labor Council President Vincent Alvarez, both of whom have written about the issue in this newspaper.

“We have seen immigrants’ rights under attack. We have seen workers’ rights under attack. We have seen welfare rights under attack. We will not allow a Constitutional Convention to be used to hurt people across the state,” Mr. Mulgrew said.

The state constitution protects New Yorkers equally, which is important for ensuring immigrants have access to health care and can become doctors and lawyers, he said.

‘Common Sense to Oppose’

According to Mr. Mulgrew, the UFT weighed the pros and cons of holding a Constitutional Convention and said that it was “common sense” not to put the benefits provided under the state’s constitution at risk.

The coalition, called New Yorkers Against Corruption, has a strong union presence, including the UFT, the New York State AFL-CIO, District Council 37 and the Civil Service Employees Association. It’s made up of more than 130 organizations including the Working Families Party, the

New York Republican State Committee and the New York Immigration Coalition.

Steven Choi, executive director of the Immigration Coalition, said that in holding a convention, “basic protections” would be put at risk. He mentioned that the state constitution protects health coverage more than the Federal Government does, and guarantees due process and the right to trial by jury for everyone, including immigrants.

“That protection is absolutely critical when considering the Federal Government,” Mr. Choi said in reference to the Trump administration’s anti-immigration policies. “This would be like opening up Pandora’s Box.”

Anti-Worker Forces

Eddie Rosario, president of the New York State Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, said that the “same people who have been threatening cuts to public health and housing are the ones pushing ‘yes’ to holding a Constitutional Convention.”

For workers in particular, changes to the constitution that could affect pensions were a topic of concern for a few of the speakers.



If voters approve a Constitutional Convention, delegates must campaign and be elected, and will be paid \$80,000 a year. The convention wouldn’t take place until 2019.

One of the concerns expressed at the press conference was that elected officials could be chosen as delegates.

“Who are those delegates going to be?” asked state Assemblyman Félix Ortiz.

Several speakers at the press conference stressed the importance of raising awareness about what was at stake.

City Council Member Carlos Menchaca said that when he talked with City Council staffers about the Constitutional Convention, “most of them didn’t know about it.”

Mr. Rosario also mentioned that telling friends and family to flip over the ballot was important because the convention question was located on the back.

“They’re trying to slip this under the radar,” he said.

