

# NARFE Members as Grasstops and Grassroots Advocates

# Role of Advocacy in NARFE

- Advocacy is the means to advance NARFE's legislative agenda
- Legislative Agenda has a twofold purpose:
  - Preserve and Protect our earned benefits
    - What we're up against in this Congress
  - Enhance our earned benefits
    - Longstanding issues that affect all of us

# Roles of Grasstops and Grassroots Advocates

- Grasstops advocates have a consistent relationship to lawmakers
  - They meet regularly with members of Congress and/or their staff
    - They discuss NARFE's legislative agenda
    - They strive to develop a consistent relationship with lawmakers and/or staff
  - Grasstops advocates are primarily CDLs and SLs, but also include Federation and Chapter Leaders (e.g., Chapter Legislative VPs or Liaisons)

# Importance of Grassroots Advocates

- Grassroots Advocates are equally important
  - Grassroots Advocates have compelling personal stories and issues relating to our earned benefits
  - Examples:
    - Many CSRS retirees and spouses are being severely shortchanged by WEP/GPO
    - FERS retirees are being disadvantaged through lower COLAs
    - Newer Federal Employees are paying more for their pensions than is necessary, and all Employees could be impacted by a return of “Schedule F”-type legislation

# How Grasstops and Grassroots Can Work Together

- Grasstops can keep their Grassroots informed of status of NARFE's legislative agenda
  - This includes rallying Grassroots for collective action such as calling for emails to lawmakers on specific issues
- Grassroots can request help from Grasstops in learning how to better advocate
- National Members in New Mexico are an important force as Grassroots

# Resources to Learn More About NARFE's Legislative Agenda

- We have numerous resources:
  - NARFE website's Advocacy Homepage
  - NARFE Magazine, especially its Bill Tracker Section
  - NARFE's NewsLine Emails
  - NARFE's Priorities for the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress
  - Using FedHub to learn and spread accurate information
  - Northern New Mexico Friends of NARFE Facebook Page
  - Articles in various Federal Employee-oriented websites and publications

# Options to Advocate

- Emails to lawmakers
  - Emails through NARFE's Legislative Action Center
    - The LAC can tell you who your legislators are
    - Email sent through the LAC can reach all of your legislators at the same time (e.g., US Senators and your US Representative)
  - Emails sent directly through the Member of Congress' own "Contact [Name of Legislator]" section of their website
  - Phone calls to Members' offices
  - Attending congressional townhall meetings (some are held in person and some are virtual)
  - Following Members of Congress on their social media pages and commenting on legislation affecting us

# What is important in communicating with lawmakers and their staff?

- Identify yourself as a concerned constituent and member of NARFE in New Mexico
- Keep communication brief, polite, and to the point
- Tell your story
  - How the issue you're addressing affects you personally (positively or negatively)
  - Ask for specific action, and ask for a reply from them
- Thank them for their service and their support of NARFE



# Importance of NARFE-PAC

- NARFE's Political Action Committee (NARFE-PAC) is NARFE's means of supporting candidates and lawmakers who support NARFE and its agenda
  - NARFE has a goal each year for:
    - How much it will collect in NARFE-PAC contributions, and
    - How much it will disperse to qualified candidates seeking election or re-election
  - NARFE members can contribute either as single time contributions or as NARFE-PAC sustainers
  - Sustainer contributions are preferable as they provide predictability

# How does NARFE decide where to spend NARFE-PAC contributions?

- NARFE HQ Advocacy:
  - Reviews current lawmaker's records of support for NARFE's legislative positions
  - Surveys first-time Congressional and Senatorial candidates for their positions on issues relating to NARFE
  - Contacts Federation Leaders asking them to survey CDLs and SLs for their views on their respective officeholder/candidates for office and report back
  - Makes the decision on whether and how much to contribute based on these and other relevant factors
  - It's important when meeting with or writing to Representatives or Senators that we NEVER mention any NARFE financial support for them (avoid the appearance of "quid pro quo")

# How do I contribute to NARFE-PAC?

- To make a single contribution, use the form in the NARFE Magazine or on the NARFE website
- To become a sustainer, fill out and send in the form contained in the NARFE Magazine
  - Contribute either by automatic monthly deduction from your annuity (preferred), or by automatic monthly charge to a credit card
- Even sustainers can make extra individual contributions to NARFE-PAC
- If you are a sustainer or have made a contribution to NARFE-PAC, feel free to take one of the NARFE-PAC Pins on our registration table

# Questions?

- Questions on either Grasstops/Grassroots actions or on NARFE-PAC?
- Thank you for your attention to these important matters!