

Overview of Federation Presidents Meeting and FedCon24, St. Louis, MO Aug. 2024

We had a very informative week in St. Louis where I attended the Federation Presidents Meeting with Federation Presidents from around the nation, and our National Conference known as FedCon24. Here are some of the most important highlights we want you to be aware of:

--During the briefing on Advocacy, we learned that around Sept. 10, Rep. Garrett Graves (R-Louisiana) and Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D-Virginia) plan to file what's called a "Discharge Petition" in the House of Representatives to force a floor vote on HR 82, the bill that would repeal WEP and GPO. HR 82 has 325 cosponsors in the House (all three NM House members are cosponsors), and the Discharge Petition only needs 218 votes to pass and bring the bill to the House Floor. The catch is: each member of the House who wants to sign the Discharge Petition **MUST** go down to the House floor in person and sign it; an aide cannot sign it for them. Here's what we ask our members to do: please use the NARFE Advocacy Email system on narfe.org to email your NM Representative (Stansbury, Vasquez, or Leger Fernandez) asking them to go to the floor in person and sign the petition, then vote for the bill on the floor. Please also thank them for cosponsoring the bill and supporting it. If you are negatively affected by WEP and/or GPO, tell them your story! We hope this last minute push will bring HR 82 over the line and then we can turn to the Senate to get them to pass the companion bill S 597!

--NARFE continues to work on getting support for the Equal COLA Act to give FERS retirees the same COLA as CSRS retirees and Social Security recipients get, as well as the Saving the Civil Service Act, which would prevent the firing of Federal workers without cause. It would also prevent the return of Schedule F from the previous Administration, which would have reclassified thousands of Federal workers out of the protections of the nonpartisan Civil Service.

--Membership Services in NARFE HQ is entering into a partnership with a consulting company called Street Level Studio, which has a lot of experience in helping organizations increase their membership. Which as you know, NARFE really needs! They are preparing a National Marketing Strategy that will be rolled out in several phases over the next year and a half or so. Each Federation will be able to take part and adapt it to its own local circumstances. We will keep you posted on the progress of this initiative and how we can take part. Of course, there

are things we can already do to spread the word about NARFE: talk to our Federal Employee and Retiree friends and neighbors; participate as NARFE reps. at Federal Employee Health Benefits annual health fairs; hand out NARFE magazines and let others know about our online Webinars and services on narfe.org, and to help others determine their earned benefits, etc.

--We let the National Executive Board (NEB) know of our urgent need to officially merge the Arizona and New Mexico Federations into the new Southwest Federation. The current National Secretary-Treasurer Kathryn Hensley says she needs an assistant to work through her backlog of duties that include approving our bylaws and completing required NEB meeting minutes. Apparently there is now money in the upcoming 2025 budget for hiring such a person. In any case, the National-Secretary Treasurer will leave office on Dec. 31, 2024, as she is term limited, so a new assistant should be available to help the new Secretary-Treasurer who will take office in January 2025.

--Finally, we remind you to vote in our NARFE National Election, either electronically or by mailing in the ballot contained in your September NARFE Magazine. Either way, your vote must be registered electronically by Sept. 30, or RECEIVED BY SEPT. 30 by mail at the New York State address listed in the Sept. NARFE Magazine. It's important to note that there are four candidates for National President, and there is ranked choice voting for them. YOU MUST RANK ALL FOUR CANDIDATES FROM 1-4 (1 is first choice, 2 is second choice, etc.). Otherwise your vote will not be counted. Sharon Reese is our only candidate for Region VII Vice President. There is also a section to vote on proposed bylaws. There is no explanation of each measure on the actual ballot, so go to the website www.narfe.org/2024-narfe-national-election/ for complete details on the proposals. Please make your voice heard!

--We had a great joint NM-AZ meeting one night, where we reported on what each state is doing. We also discussed ideas for our upcoming 1st ever Southwest Federation Conference, which will be held sometime in the Spring of 2025 in Las Cruces, sponsored by the Las Cruces Chapter. Thank you, Las Cruces!

--It was invigorating to attend the National Conference with hundreds of other people committed to NARFE and its mission! It gives us renewed energy and enthusiasm for moving NARFE's work forward and strengthening our members in New Mexico and Arizona. Thank you all for your support and involvement!

Mark Mickelsen, Federation President