

Report on LegCon23 for New Mexico

Here is a brief report on LegCon23, our national Legislative Conference which was held virtually by Zoom from June 20-22, 2023. I feel the Conference was very successful. After two days of lively and informative seminar instruction on how to effectively perform advocacy with our elected officials, on June 22 we held the actual Zoom meetings with staffers who work for our U.S. Senators and Representatives who represent New Mexico in Congress: Senators Heinrich and Lujan, and Rep. Stansbury (1st Congressional District), Rep. Vasquez (2nd Congressional District), and Rep. Leger Fernandez (3rd Congressional District). The meetings with the congressional staffers were very constructive, and I want to thank Kay Snowfleet, Lorna Howerton, and Bill Britton, who along with me attended as our SL and CDLs, for their participation. NARFE Advocacy in HQ had requested us to concentrate our presentations on three main areas:

1. Repeal of WEP and GPO as part of the Social Security Fairness Act;
2. Ensuring equal COLAs for FERS retirees as embodied in the Equal COLA Act; and,
3. Protecting our earned benefits from attacks (proposed cuts, etc.).

I'm pleased to report that the congressional staffers were uniformly receptive to these issues. We asked them to pass on our thanks to their bosses who have cosponsored or otherwise supported these bills, and who have opposed negative bills that would hurt our earned benefits. For example, all five New Mexico Senators and Representatives have already cosponsored the Social Security Fairness Act, which is rapidly approaching the point of having more than the 290 cosponsors in the House needed to schedule a floor vote there, and if passed, send it on to the Senate.

Where the Senators and Representatives have not yet cosponsored or supported the relevant bills, we asked that they do so. Because there is some movement in the House to propose serious cuts to our earned benefits, we asked the staffers to alert their bosses to those threats. The meetings were cordial, and we will follow up with the staffers to ensure that our requests are fulfilled. We will keep you posted on the progress of the bills and alert you to opportunities to make your voices heard at the critical times. As always, please stay alert by consulting the Bill Tracker Section of the NARFE Magazine, as well as the Advocacy Section of the narfe.org website, including how to contact your Representative and two Senators about bills and issues that affect you.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Thanks and best regards,

Mark Mickelsen, NM Federation President

Tel. or text: (720) 205-0251

Email: mmickelsen@aol.com