



The Shawnee Signal
Chapter 1162 Shawnee Mission Kansas
National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association
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www.narfe-chapter1162.org

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NARFE's Legislative Hotline: (703)-838-7780. Toll free: 1-877-217-8234.

A chapter meeting will be canceled if Shawnee Mission School District cancels classes.

Welcome New Member!
Angela Lewis

President's News - Louise Lloyd

As I write this article, we are well underway into 2015. With the new year came the new Congress controlled by the Republican party which will try to accomplish its vision under a Democrat President with "Veto" power over any bills. A "Veto" can be overcome with a 2/3 majority approval vote by Congress, but that is not easily accomplished. So the question remains will this Congress be any more effective in making important decisions than the past Congress who did not show a willingness for compromise? Additionally, the Republican congressional delegation is really almost two different parties, the more traditional Republican and moderate Republicans and the Tea Party Republicans. With this configuration, it is very difficult to get the "Republican" congressional members to agree among themselves. I personally think it is doubtful that this congress will be any more successful than the previous congress in dealing with the nation's issues. It is more important than ever for all of us to be aware of what Congress is proposing, and letting your congressional delegation know how you feel on important proposals. Several of the current proposals affecting Federal employees and retirees are discussed in the Legislative article in this newsletter. Also additional information on status of current bills is outlined in each NARFE magazine. NARFE does it make easy to contact your Federal congressional delegation, particularly if you have provided your e-mail address to NARFE HQ.

NARFE HQ has undergone a realignment resulting from reducing from four national officers to two. An excellent change has been the creation of a position focusing only on State legislative issues. Chris Farrell, already a member of the NARFE Legislative Department has taken this position. State issues can also definitely affect NARFE members, for example, in the State of Kansas where federal pensions are currently exempt from Kansas state income tax. Things can change, especially in a situation where severe budget deficits are anticipated. To see more information from NARFE HQ, including more information on the realignment, a [link](#) to the **latest quarterly NARFE HQ Insider newsletter** has been posted on our chapter website.

The 2015 NARFE Scholarship Program runs February 1st - April 24th, see February NARFE magazine for complete details.

Legislative News - Louis Bornman 1st Vice President and Legislative Chair

Some good news before the bad: Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney and colleagues have reintroduced the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act. The legislation would provide six weeks of paid leave for federal employees for the birth, adoption, or fostering of a child. Federal employees should not have to choose between caring for their families and keeping their jobs.

Rep. Stephen F. Lynch, D-MA, introduced H.R. 313, the Wounded Warriors Federal Leave Act of 2015, which is similar to the bill he introduced last Congress. Under the legislation, service-disabled veterans employed by the federal government will begin their jobs with 104 hours of paid sick time for medical leave as a result of their injuries. This will make it easier for wounded veterans to schedule medical appointments and keep up with their rehabilitation from service-related injuries. The additional leave will expire after at the end of their first year of employment. NARFE supports this bipartisan bill, which currently has six cosponsors.

The FAIR Act – introduced by Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-VA) and Sen. Brian Schatz (D-HI), the legislation will provide for a 3.8 percent pay increase for federal employees in 2016. NARFE supports the legislation and issued a statement in support of the bills. The bill numbers are H.R. 304 and S. 164. There is a letter on the Legislative Action Center you can send to your members of Congress asking them to cosponsor this legislation.

Now the bad: H.R. 138 – introduced by Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA), the legislation would repeal the Affordable Care Act and require the establishment of a national health program administered by OPM. The new program would offer Federal Employee Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) benefits to individuals not currently eligible for FEHBP. Because the legislation requires separate risk pools, NARFE has not taken a position on legislation.

Rep. Cynthia Lummis, R-WY, has introduced H.R. 417, a bill that would require a reduction in the number of federal employees, shrinking the federal workforce by 10 percent over the next five years. The reduction would be achieved through attrition by imposing a hiring freeze on any agency exceeding a limit of one new hire for every three departing employees. Although the bill's sponsor claims the measure would save the federal government \$35 billion without changes in appropriations, it would result in the remaining workforce having to do more with fewer employees. NARFE opposes the proposal. I expect the far right members of both houses to push even harder for adoption of the extreme agenda they have been trying to pursue including Rep. Paul Ryan's budget proposals. Be prepared to make your voice heard with our Congressman and Senators over the issues as they arise and the easiest way to do that is through the NARFE legislative action center website.

I will be attending the NARFE National Legislative Conference 11-17 March in Washington, D.C.

Future Meeting Dates/Activities:

February 24th – Chapter Meeting, 1:30 p.m., Overland Park Lutheran Church, 79th and Lowell, **Program:** Elizabeth Bornman, 2nd Vice-President/Service Officer will make a presentation on Service Officers responsibilities.

March 24th - 12:45 p.m. Pizza Luncheon/Business Meeting Overland Park Lutheran Church, 79th and Lowell, **Program:** Tom Huntzinger, Kansas Federation NARFE PAC Chairman; Judy Etter, Kansas Federation Membership Chairman

April 26th-28th, Kansas Federation Convention, Topeka, Kansas – Contact Secretary, Ginny Glauser if interested in attending.

April 28th – 1:30 p.m. Overland Park Lutheran Church, 79th and Lowell.

Service Officer – Elizabeth Bornman

In December, OPM reduced its retirement processing claims to the lowest numbers in more than a year to 11,669 claims compared to the prior month of 14,039. The agency did reach an 83.7% rate of retirement claims processed within 60 days of being received. The dent in the backlog may not last long, as OPM typically sees an influx of new retirement claims every year in January and February.

The Social Security Administration will be mailing an annual benefit statement for the first time in three years to some American workers. It is re-starting mailings in September at 5 year intervals to workers who have not signed upon line accounts. The statements will be sent to workers at age 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, and 60. They are likely somewhat smaller than the dollar amount you will receive when you actually claim benefits, because they are expressed in today's dollars before adjustment for inflation. The statement provides a starting point for workers to consider the impact of delayed filing. It provides valuable information about how delaying when you start your benefit between 62 and 70 will increase the monthly amount for the rest of your life – an important fact for workers to consider. The statement is silent when it comes to putting context around the specific benefit amounts. The actual number, it explains, could be affected by changes in your earnings over time, any changes to benefits Congress might enact, and by cost of living increases after you start getting benefits. Take someone who is 54 years old today and her statement says she can expect a \$1,500 monthly benefit 13 years from now when she is at her full retirement age of 67. If inflation runs 2% every year between now and then, that's a cumulative inflation of 30 percent so her benefit will be \$1,950 but prices will be 30% higher too. If you can't live on \$1500 a month then start saving.

OPM Retirement Information: Remarriage, divorce, death or spouse, change of address or financial institution or amount of insurance under FEGLI, **1-888-767-6738**

Contact Information:

Senator Jerry Moran – jerry_moran@moran.senate.gov; Olathe, KS office telephone 913-393-0711. D.C. Office: 202-224-6521. *Signup for newsletter:* www.moran.senate.gov
Senator Pat Roberts – pat_roberts@roberts.senate.gov; Overland Park Office: 913-451-9343. D.C. Office: 202-224-4774. *Signup for newsletter:* www.roberts.senate.gov
Congressman Kevin Yoder – Overland Park, KS telephone: 913-621-0832, Washington D.C. telephone: 202-225-2865. *Signup for newsletter:* www.yoder.house.gov

Alzheimer's News – Judy Lukas Arnold, Alzheimer's Chairperson

Happy 2015 to All! The end-of-year holidays were eventful, sometimes hectic, for almost everyone I know, but I hope that you found time to relax and enjoy the blessings of the season. Of course, families touched with Alzheimer's may experience extra stress with increased demands and obligations and because of what can feel like an overwhelming sense of loss. Given that, the Alzheimer's Association runs a **24/7 Helpline: 1-800-272-3900**. We "armed" those in attendance at our December party with this number, but we want everyone on our mailing list to keep it for future use. And speaking of our party, we did well with our 2nd annual local Alzheimer's Silent Auction. We raised \$342, due to some friendly "bidding wars" and straight donations. We are grateful to the following for donation of items and/or money to make our fundraiser a success: Elizabeth & Louis Bornman, Lorene Christin, Mary Kay Dorrell, Don Faidley, Sheryl Gulley, Lorna Larson, Louise Lloyd, Nancy Miller, Bruce & Diane Smith, and myself.

There are a few other things of which I'd like folks to be aware. 1) There will be a national **Alzheimer's Advocacy Forum** to be held in D.C. March 23-25. A goal is to give participants an opportunity to speak directly to members of Congress, in hopes of securing funding to effectively prevent or treat Alzheimer's by 2025. A treat of the conference is that award-winning journalist, Wolf Blitzer, will be a speaker. For more information, visit alz.org/forum. 2) The commercial movie, "**Still Alice**," is getting attention for the well-done and sensitive depiction of a woman, who is struck with Alzheimer's. I plan to see it soon, as it has been described as "a story of love, family and hope." Let me know, if you want to join me! 3) If you haven't seen it yet, get a hold of the January-February edition of the "**AARP Bulletin**." The cover story is called "The Faces of Alzheimer's" and poignantly discusses the issue of the disease. 4) Remember that we will want to have a good showing for the **State Federation meeting** in Topeka in April. I will begin collecting items for auctions at monthly meetings. 5) Finally, keep collecting and sending or bringing me those **Best Choice** labels. Thanks for all you do!

Reminder: Don't forget to bring your egg cartons & plastic grocery bags to meetings for donation to the Community Service Center of Shawnee, Inc.

Sunshine Committee: Contact Don Faidley if you know of any members who may be sick.

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