

THE 740 EXPRESS

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES, CHAPTER 740

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March 1, 1998

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Next Chapter Meetings: Our next meeting will be on Thursday March 19 at the Warrington Motor Lodge, Route 611 (just North of Street Rd.) at 12:00 Noon. Call Beryl Fogelsanger (343-3467) early in the week.

NARFE 740 President's Message:

For many years, I have tried to change the voting procedure used at NARFE national conventions. But, I have not succeeded. I have proposed an electronic system whereby all the votes that a NARFE chapter is accorded based on membership will be recorded for every vote involving resolutions and other matters. In the past all eligible votes were recorded only in elections for officers. Up to the present all eligible votes each chapter has accorded to it cannot be cast in votes involving resolutions. In these cases, only one (1) vote was recorded for each chapter voting no matter how many eligible votes they had to cast. This was caused by the voting method of a "voice vote," or a "stand-up vote," or a "show of hands vote" where only one vote was counted for each chapter and where "proxy votes" were not permitted to be cast at all.

The same undemocratic voting system is in effect at NARFE State federation conventions. An electronic voting system or one in which a bar coded ballot would enable all eligible votes of each chapter and all proxy votes to be counted in every case where a vote is involved. It would be quicker, more accurate and more democratic than the present voting system. I have just written to enlist the good office of Vice President Al Golato to initiate action to correct the present voting system, which I consider to be illegal.

NARFE CONVENTIONS:

The Pennsylvania Federation of Chapters (NARFE) will have its convention at the Holiday Inn, 4751 Lindle Road, East Harrisburg, Pa. 17111 from May 3, 1998 through May 6, 1998.

The NARFE National Convention is scheduled to be held in Orlando, Fla. From September 13, 1998 through September 17, 1998.

TAXES:

At present, certain committees in Congress are considering a change to the present tax system or adoption of a new system. They are considering a Flat Tax System, a National Sales Tax System and others. A proposal which has been brought to the attention of members of Congress and the Office of the President of the United States which involves elimination of the present system including the IRS seems to have gotten nowhere. Since the tax system will affect all of our members it will behoove all of us to keep our eyes and ears open.

Congressman Greenwood spurns NARFE's request to cosponsor WEP and GPO. Max Schwartz, Norm Melling and John De Matteo of Chapter 740, Bob Reynolds the State Federation President, Jack Horning, representatives from Chapters 1287, 1562 met with the Congressman Greenwood on January 5th. As discussed in the last issue of our Newsletter, NARFE HDQ. is supporting two House Resolutions - 2273 and 2549 - intended to eliminate Social Security Offsets (Windfall Elimination Provisions and Government Pension Offsets) for those federal retirees making less than certain specific amounts as a result of these offsets.

Take for an example: (See the November Newsletter for specifics. Furthermore, note the private sector retirees are not affected by these offsets.) Congressman Greenwood was asked to cosponsor both HR's. He stated he appreciated the plight of the affected federal retirees, however, as a matter of bipartisan politics these HR's will not pass Congress and, therefore, he would deceive us by cosponsoring these HR's. (In a post-meeting telephone call between Judy Park of NARFE HDQ. and Max, Judy was informed of Greenwood's position. She stated there are Republicans cosponsoring these HR's and she expects many more.)

Congressman Greenwood told us he would address the aforementioned during the Congressional Social Security overhaul package hearings slated for late next year. While discussing Social Security Greenwood offered that Social Security would be in trouble once the baby boomers appeared on the scene in 2012. (Note: as stated in previous Chapter Newsletters there would be no crisis until 2029 if the Social Security Fund had available to it all the money the Government owes - not at 600 billion dollars.) It is this Government caused crisis that will hurt federal retirees and Social Security retirees both - not the baby boomers.)

There was an article in the local paper that Congressman Greenwood wants to prevent the abuse by some federal workers on disability who, supposedly, are making more while on disability than if they were working. Max discussed the situation with Judy Park of Headquarters before and after meeting. NARFE's preliminary position, as we told the Congressman, was that the abuses, if any, were insignificant. Those on disability receive 75% of gross salary and do not pay taxes. As a worker he would have to pay, in most instances, a rate higher than 25%, however, this rate applies to adjusted gross, that is, after deductions. Chapter 740 and Hdq. will work up the figures and pursue the subject further before other politicians try get political mileage at the expense of federal workers.

Need Help?: Call the Federal Retiree Assistance Center, (215) 597-0419. The Center is located at the Federal Building, Rm. 1208, 6th and Arch Sts, Philadelphia, and handles OPM/FEHB problems only (incorrect payments, non-receipt of checks, etc). Office hours are 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

FUTURE EVENTS:

Future Chapter 740 NARFE meetings will address concerns about Wills, Living Wills, Trusts, and other financial planning information. Stay tuned and join us at our luncheons / meetings.

OPM's Annuitant Express

The toll-free automated telephone system that went into operation in January of last year, for its first service permitted retirees to make federal tax withholding changes during the 1996 tax season. The number, in case you've mislaid it, is 1-800-409-6528 -- and don't forget your PIN number.

Important numbers: Capitol switchboard 202-224-3121, 1800-522-6721, 1-800-692-3524, 1-800-972-3524; Bill Status 202-225-1772; White House comment line 202/456-1111 (FAX 2461); Supreme Court 202-479-3000; OPM 202-606-1000; Federal Election Commission 1-800-424-9530; NARFE Hotline 202-234-0503; president@whitehouse.gov; NARFE HQ www.narfe.org; www.visi.com/juan/congress

If you have access to the Internet review our newsletter and links on WEB Site: www.crompton.com/NARFE740 Sign up for Free FEDWEEK at: www.FEDweek.com

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To: