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**Following is an outstanding explanation of what the Leadership of the NRLN does, written by Kitty Kennedy, Regional Editor of the *Retiree Guardian* and former TRA-AZ President.**

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The role the NRLN has been fulfilled very successfully (as I see it) on three primary fronts:

1) To educate legislators, their staffs, and the committee staffs who decide what gets considered and passed into law or not. I have joined other retirees on many, many visits to members of Congress and their staffs and seldom found them having knowledge of retirees issues. How often have you heard a member of Congress admit they voted on bills they never read? So the NRLN tries to make sure congressional members and staffs know what's in the bills that affect retirees. For example, the most recent major changes in pension laws were in 2006, and the NRLN organized lots of times meeting with Representatives, Senators and staff (in Washington, D.C. and local offices) to ensure they understood what was in the legislation. We came away successful--many proposals and amendments were changed, added or eliminated to protect pensions, e.g. the funding levels, etc. That pension protection legislation took years to get passed. Of course, we didn't get everything we wanted, but we made a difference.

Do you know what "Back-Door Reversions" are? Most legislators don't, and yet that's what allows pension monies to be used for actions that have nothing to do with pensions. The NRLN has waged successful campaigns advocating stops to that kind of spending by visiting congressional offices and sharing information that will protect retirees. The NRLN sponsors "fly-ins" to Washington, D. C. usually twice a year to meet with members of Congress and committees. We must "stay on their radar" to advocate because the thousands of paid lobbyists are surely operating in the interests of those who seek to take away what we all earned.

The methods used to educate federal legislators are based in the creation of White Papers. Is everyone familiar with the NRLN White Papers that are available on their website? These White Papers take extraordinary time and work to author (usually by Michael Calabrese), and then we "socialize" them with the appropriate members of Congress and committees who can do something about it. For example, the White Paper on prescription drugs and the protection of generic drugs is crucial for retirees. That White Paper was circulated hundreds, if not thousands of times, and helped with new legislation in some cases and the protection of current legislation in others.

2) To advocate with members of Congress and the administration. "The *NRLN Focus*" has covered numerous stories about the NRLN members and officers meeting with Congressional committees and administration staffs including the recent meeting with the Assistant of Labor Phyllis Borzi about the protection of pensions in a de-risking corporate environment. Recently, the "*Focus*" reported on testimony given by NRLN President Bill Kadereit to the ERISA Advisory Council about pension protections. This work is on-going. The NRLN partners with other retirees groups to produce success and prevent damage to private pensions that are severely under attack as corporations design ways to eliminate their financial liabilities. The NRLN Executive Director, Marta Bascom, is Washington, D.C.-based and keeps continual contact with committees, staffs, and offices of members of Congress to stay informed.

3) To track proposed federal legislation and send *Action Alerts* to members. While the current Congress has been labeled "do nothing" that hardly takes care of the on-going need to track what is happening. Knowing what bills are being proposed, keeping us informed and telling us how to take immediate action in our best interest is an invaluable service of the NRLN. Do you contact your members of Congress when the NRLN

sends an *Action Alert*? I promise you that your contacts are effective. Most congressional offices don't record your individual comments, but they do track how many "for" and how many "against" their position, and it makes a difference.

The key to all of this effort is to have a strong involved grassroots network, and that includes each of you. Without that all our leadership's work may be in vain. We need you to respond to the "*Action Alerts*". If we ask for people to show up at "*Town Hall Meetings*", we need you to do that as well. Now is the time to do it, during this election. These people hold the key to your near futures.

**The NRLN held their annual Fly-In in Washington, DC from 9-29 to 10-1-14.** Board and grassroots members attended from around the country. Arizona was ably represented by Ken Gornall, NRLN AZ Chapter Legislative Director and Jennifer Gornall, AZ Chapter Leadership Team, NRLN Grassroots Organization, Desert SW Region and Joe Dombrowski, President of Lucent Retiree Organization (LRO). Around the meetings, they met with representatives of both Arizona Senators and those of Representatives Grijalva, Schweikert, Franks, and Salmon. During the visits they covered the following topics:

**Pension Asset Protection**-pension reporting reforms to provide more timely & accurate disclosure of the financial health of pension funds, elimination of practices that give the appearance of fully funded plans, requested legislation to implement regulations governing "De-risking".

**Cost of drugs**-asked for co-sponsorship and support of legislation requiring Medicare to put prescription drugs up for competitive bidding. They asked for funding to expedite the backlog of generics awaiting approval by FDA, legislation for the safe importation & re-importation of drugs into the USA so seniors don't have to go to Canada, Mexico, etc. and for legislation to prevent the "pay for delay" practice drug manufacturers are using

**Social Security & Medicare**-proposed that the wage caps be removed for Social Security payroll taxes & that the Medicare rates on payroll taxes be increased between .5% & 1.5%. Also voiced opposition to increasing the retirement age to 70.



Joe, Ken & Jen with Grijalva's K. Mishkin



Joe, Jen & Ken with Schweikert's M. Stoika



Joe, Jen & Ken with Flake's Emily Meyers

*Please become a member of the National Retiree Legislative Network ARIZONA Chapter by filling out this membership form and mail it along with your \$25.00 contribution to NRLN, Inc. P.O. Box 18757, Washington, D.C.20036-8757. Or, make your contribution with your credit card on the NRLN website at [www.nrln.org](http://www.nrln.org). Click on the "Join Us" tab on the home page and select Support the NRLN. We need your commitment to our goals.*

### **National Retiree Legislative Network - Arizona Chapter Membership Form**

*The NRLN is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. Contributions are not tax deductible.*

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **AGE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **UNDER 55:** \_\_\_\_\_ **55-64:** \_\_\_\_\_ **65 OR OVER**

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_ **CITY:** \_\_\_\_\_ **STATE** \_\_\_\_\_ **: ZIP: ZIP+4:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-MAIL ADDRESS (IF AVAILABLE):** \_\_\_\_\_

*I get my pension check from* \_\_\_\_\_ *(name of company) Years Retired* \_\_\_\_\_

*I am a member of* \_\_\_\_\_ *Retiree Association*