



Volume 2 Issue 2

Summer 2015

State Congressional Visits

The NRLN NM Chapter Co-Presidents, Cassie Kelley, and, Marlene Tricoli have been traveling most of the summer visiting family and friends in the Mid-West. However, they are still concerned about what Congress is up to when it comes to affecting the New Mexico Chapter retirees. In May, Cassie and Marlene visited Senator Tom Udall's Albuquerque office & met with Bill Woldman. The purpose of the meeting was to bring attention to the pending Senate prescription drugs bills that need Senator Udall's co-sponsorship. Senate bills S.31, S131, and S122 affect the cost of prescription drugs, which is definitely a major concern for retirees.

Cassie and Marlene presented the current NM 2014 Report Card that represents which NM congress member supports the bills that the NRLN has identified as important to retirees. Please refer to the back-side of this page to review the bills the NRLN is supporting.

Martha Deahl NRLN Desert Southwest Region VP Goes to Washington

While attending the 2015 NRLN Annual Board meeting held in Washington, D. C. on July 21st, Martha Deahl, Vice-President, NRLN Desert Southwest Region, which includes the NRLN NM Chapter met with Lauren Arias, Legislative Correspondent, for Senator Udall. The NRLN NM Report Card was shared with Lauren and Martha specifically asked why Senator Udall hasn't co-sponsored pending bills S.122, S.31 and S.131. All three of these bills have the ability to reduce the cost of prescription drugs for retirees. One other major concern the NRLN has is the passing of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement. Leaked information from secret TPP meetings show that Medicare would be made vulnerable and future attempts by Medicare to negotiate lower drug prices would be jeopardized. Other topics were about protecting retirees' pension, the need for clearer annual funding notices that companies send out once a year regarding the status of their pension funds. Lauren listened to our concerns and agreed to let Martha know if Senator Udall would consider co-sponsoring the pending senate bills that impact the cost of prescription drugs.

NRLN Associations and Chapters Meet With the PBGC



Various NRLN Associations had requested a meeting in Washington, D.C. between the **Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC)** which protects the retirement incomes of more than 41 million American workers in more than 24000 private-sectors, and the **Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA)** an agency of the United States Department of Labor responsible for administering, regulating and enforcing the provisions of Title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) to discuss how hard it is for retirees to understand Annual Funding Notices that companies send out once a year regarding the status of their pension funds. Hopefully, the results of this meeting will be a generic annual funding notice that retirees will be able to understand. *(Photo: At PBGC Headquarters CenturyLink retirees Judy Stenberg, NRLN Vice President – Pacific Region, Cindy Hadsell, NRLN Vice President – Midwest Region, and Martha Deahl, NRLN Vice President - Desert Southwest Region, with NRLN President Bill Kadereit.)*

(Over)

Treasury/IRS Bans Lump Sum Buyout Offers

To quote Bill Kadereit from his July 13th NRLN President's Forum, "On July 9, the Treasury Department and the Internal Revenue Service announced that it will amend the ERISA regulations to no longer allow sponsors of defined benefit pension plans to offer lump sum payments to replace pension annuity payments to pension plan participants who are...already receiving a monthly pension check". All other lump sum scenarios will still be allowed. "Pension plan sponsors that have already received Treasury/IRS approval to offer a voluntary lump sum pension buyout—such as Alcatel-Lucent's recent announcement—are allowed to go forward." What does this mean to US West/QWEST/CenturyLink current retiree? This means CenturyLink (CTL) may not offer a lump sum to retirees in "pay status" unless it is related to termination of the pension plan.

Let's talk about "**What can we do?**" address other retiree issues. You can help by taking some action.

The most important action you can take is to respond to all Action Alerts and attend local Town Hall Meetings. Email, fax or mail a hard copy of your Action Alert message the local office of your members of Congress.

If the NRLN has your active email address, you will receive a request to respond to occasional Action Alerts. Or, go to the NRLN website at www.nrln.org and click on the "Take Action Now" icon. This will take you to the latest Action Alert. You can send the message as is, or, you can edit the message to personalize it.

If you would like to see if your Representative or Senators are co-sponsors of bills we support or oppose, just plug in your zip code at www.nrln.org in the window next to the photo of the U.S. Capitol Building on the right side of the home page, click the GO!, and you'll see a USA map. Click on your state and follow the links to your Senators or Representative. There you'll find contact information about him/her, what committees he/she is on, and if he/she co-sponsors bills we support or oppose.

Don't forget to access www.nrln.org on a regular basis. Current news links, recent NRLN President's Forum messages are posted and you may always check to learn the latest NM Chapter events by tabbing over to Chapters and scrolling down to NM Chapter.

The NM Chapter needs volunteers!!! We are in desperate need of a Communications person to assist in preparing this newsletter. You will have lots of assistance, so please volunteer. Call Cassie Kelley (505-280-8008) or Marlene Tricoli (505-821-7109) to discuss this opportunity to help fellow retirees.

We would like to invite you, all former TRA-NM retirees to join our NM Chapter. We are looking after your pension benefits (if you are on a pension). Protecting Social Security and Medicare benefits and Prescription Drugs are discussed every time we are in front of your NM Congressional Members.

[PLEASE JOIN the NRLN NM Chapter!](#)

National Retiree Legislative Network New Mexico Chapter Application 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: _____ Email Address (if available): _____

I get my retirement benefits from _____ (name of company)

Mail this form with your check or money order (no cash please) for \$25, \$50, \$75 or more (any amount will be appreciated) payable to NRLN, Inc., P.O. Box 18757, Washington, D.C. 20036-8757