



### Message from Martha Deahl, NRLN Regional Grassroots VP for AZ/NM/NV

I recently completed meetings in Washington, DC on your behalf. I want to thank you for your trust and contributions to the NRLN. Without your support by making yearly contributions, I would not be able to fly there and meet with NM Congressional Senators and Representatives making them aware of your needs as members/advocates of the NRLN. I would like to thank Joe Dombrowski, President of the Lucent Retiree Organization and Vice President of the NRLN, who accompanied me on all Capital Hill visits.

I must share with you why I believe going to Washington, D.C. is very important.

- Sometimes you are able to meet personally with a Senator or Representative but most of the time you meet with a member of their staff. I have been fortunate to meet directly with their Chiefs of Staff or Legislative Director who report directly to the Senator or Representative. I always ask to meet with them but if they are busy I still meet with a staff person that reports to them. I know your concerns are directly shared with your Senator or Representative.
- By making the trip to D.C, it allows me to personally share the NRLN AZ Report Card. This way they definitely know **you** are aware if their boss has or has not supported pending legislation that will reduce the outrageous price of prescription drugs. Of special note are: **H.R. 2228** – a House of Representatives bill to allow American citizens to buy Safe and Affordable (cheaper) prescription drugs from Canada, **H.R. 3061**- a House of Representatives bill to cause Medicare to use the bidding process to negotiate with pharmaceutical companies to get better pricing, **S. 122** – a Senate bill to allow American citizens to buy Safe and Affordable (cheaper) prescription drugs from Canada and **S. 31** – a Senate bill to cause Medicare to use the bidding process to negotiate with pharmaceutical companies to get better pricing.
- Also, going to DC gave me the opportunity to share current pertinent issues the NRLN is asking your Senators or Representative to take action on. This time I made them aware of the need for legislation to be taken on protecting your pension. Annual Funding Notices need to be more understandable and ERISA needs advance notice of pension plan mergers, mergers, acquisitions, and spin-offs that a company may be planning. In today's world ERISA is notified after the fact. The NRLN not only made them aware but provided legislative language that could be introduced in Congress.
- I presented a letter for Representatives and Senators to send to the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Sylvia Mathews Burwell urging her to exercise her authority to implement a law to allow importation of prescription drugs from Canada. The NRLN learned the 2003 Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 became Public Law 108-173 in December 2003.



(Right) Rep. Steven Pearce (NM02), Martha and Joe Dombrowski, LRO President.



Martha and Graham Mason, Legislative Director, for Rep. Ben Ray Lujan (NM03)

I requested meetings with the Chiefs of Staffs for both NM Senators and the three NM Representatives. I met with Jude McCartin, Legislative Director for Senator Joe Heinrich. I have met the last two years with staff members for Senator Udall but I did not get a response to my request from Bianca Ortiz-Wertheim, Senator Udall's Chief of Staff. Meetings were held with Graham Mason, Legislative Director for Ben Ray Lujan, NM03 (see photo) and Andrew Aragon, Legislative Assistant for Representative Steve Pierce, NM02. I was fortunate to grab Representative Steve Pearce for a quick photo (see photo). I also heard back from Dominic Gabello, Chief of Staff for Representative Michelle Lujan-Grisham but not until I was already in DC. I will be sure to meet with him when I return in 2017.

#### **Information about your Senators and Representatives:**

- Do you want to know how much your members of Congress are receiving in contributions? Go to: <http://www.opensecrets.org>.
- Would you like to know whether New Mexico Representatives and Senators are cosponsors of bills the NRLN supports that are important to seniors? <http://www.nrln.org/reportcard.html> then follow the instructions

#### **Downsizing taking place at CenturyLink:**

Did you receive a notice that CenturyLink was downsizing over 3,000 additional personnel? View CenturyLink CEO's letter at: <https://www.thelayoff.com/t/Jongvgh>. It is my understanding that those who will be receiving severance pay the dollars will not be receiving them from the CTL Pension Fund (good news).

#### **NRLN NM Grassroots Conference Call:**

I have been busy moving to Wittmann, AZ so I could not arrange for this sooner, but I would like to schedule an NRLN NM Grassroots Conference call after the first of the year. Please join the call as the information will be valuable for all NM Grassroots Advocates. It is free and you can ask friends and neighbors to join the call. Your NM Chapter Co-Presidents Cassie Kelley and Marlene Tricoli, Congressional District Leaders Emil Sommerlad, and Jack Ferguson will be on the call. Our deepest sympathy goes to Judy Woolman on the passing of her husband, our loyal supporter, Neal.

#### **Mark your calendars.**

**Date: January 23<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

**Time: 9:00 AM (MST)**

**Call-in Number 1-800-503-2899**

**Code: 6876157# (Don't forget to enter the # sign)**

I will share more details about my Washington, DC visits, how the NRLN tracks bills that are important, and how our new President may affect retirees.

**CenturyLink Advocate:** For the NM US West/Century link and predecessor company retirees please contact your advocate Cassie Kelley for problems related to your pension or healthcare. Cassie can be reached at 505-298-8666. Cassie's E-mail address: [cassiek@comcast.net](mailto:cassiek@comcast.net)

#### **Reminder:**

The NRLN FOCUS with the NM Chapter insert will only be mailed to those Chapter members who are NRLN **individual contributors** and **do not** have an email address in the NRLN database. An email will be sent to the Chapter members that have an email address to notify them when the Chapter newsletter and FOCUS are available on the NRLN website at [www.nrln.org](http://www.nrln.org).

#### **Become a FACEBOOK Friend**

As more and more of us are using FACEBOOK to reach family, friends and others, we recently learned of a FACEBOOK page "USWEST/QWEST retirees and wannabes" that has retirees from many states. All AZ/NM Chapter members have been asked to join this group. It is a closed group which means after you send a request to join as a friend, someone from the group has to accept you as a friend. It is fun to see the posts and you will have an opportunity to post something. It is a very active group. Anyone can join..... Give it a try.

I will leave you with this comment. It is very important to let our congressional leaders hear from us!!

*Please respond to all NRLN Action Alerts - the latest at <http://www.nrln.org/index.html> under **Take Action***