

To: NRLN Board and Retire Association Leaders

From: Bill Kadereit, NRLN President

Subject: Report on NRLN Washington, DC Fly-In/Drive-In

I want to share with you a brief report on the NRLN's Washington, DC Fly-In/Drive-In on Tuesday and Wednesday, Sept. 15 and 16 and, for some individuals, Thursday, Sept 17. Sixty-six NRLN Grassroots Network members participated in our event that had as its primary objective the communication of the NRLN's key legislative initiatives to their Representatives and Senators and/or staff members.

The group was composed of retirees from 19 states and 10 retiree organizations, including AT&T-ACER, AT&T Ameritech/SBC Retirees, National Chrysler Retirement Association, Delta Air Lines Retirement Committee, Delta Pilots-DP3, Detroit Edison, General Motors Retirees Association, EKRA – Kodak , Lucent Retirees Organization and Association of US West Retirees.

The conferees exhibited a high level of interest in the presentations in the Tuesday afternoon orientation session. I opened the session with an overview of the NRLN and our key legislative initiatives including protection of retirees' pension asset and benefits, and the need for reforms in bankruptcy laws and PBGC rules to provide fairer treatment of retirees. Michael Calabrese, NRLN Legislative Adviser, went into more details about our objectives for pension asset protection. Marta Bascom, NRLN Executive Director, covered what we hope to gain for retirees if a health care reform bill is passed with the sections we support on incentives to employers to continue health care benefits for retirees. Marta pointed out that health care reform legislation current in the House and Senate is not the NRLN's last shot at retirement health care issues. We will continue to advocate our health care legislative objectives year after year if necessary.

Will Buergey, Chairman of Delta Pilots-DP3, who headed the NRLN's Task Force on Bankruptcy and PBGC Rules reform legislation made a fine presentation on why legislation is need to better protect retirees when a company declares bankruptcy and when a pension plan is taken over by the PBGC. His committee members did an outstanding job in producing white papers that will be used to gain the attention of lawmakers on the inequities working against retirees in Bankruptcy Court proceedings and the PBGC's calculations of payments. The Delta Association Retirement Committee (DALRC) contributed funding of \$10,000 and a bankruptcy attorney, Dean Gloster, contributed his legal services.

Kitty Kennedy, NRLN Board Member and President of the Telephone Retirees Association of Arizona—affiliated with the Association of US West Retirees, and Joe Dombrowski, Lucent Retirees Organization Mountain Region Director, talked with the conferees about the importance of developing a working relationship with members of Congress and their staff members. Bob Martina, NRLN Vice President – Grassroots Network, talked about the structure of the Grassroots Network and how "Uncle Bob Wants YOU!" (the conferees) as state and district Grassroots Network leaders. Bob also covered the logistics for the NRLN bus for transportation to Capitol Hill.

There was a lot of energy exhibited by the conferees during the orientation session, in the hospitality and dinner that followed. That high level of energy was obvious on Wednesday and Thursday on The Hill as they carried the NRLN's legislative issues folder and message they personalized into meetings with lawmakers and staff members. While the final tally isn't complete, we estimate that over 100 lawmakers and staff members were visited.

Prior to going to Washington, a few members of the NRLN Task Force had scheduled a Thursday meeting with officials at the PBGC. A number of conferees changed their return home travel plans to attend the meeting with the PBGC and our delegation turned out to be 24 people. We aired our concerns and I believe we started the PBGC officials giving serious consideration to what we think are actions which are unfair to retirees.

Contents of the NRLN's folder that Cathy Cone, DALRC, assembled for delivery to members of Congress are in the attachments. The folders included the NRLN Talking Points and the Executive Summaries from the NRLN's white papers on [pension protection](#), [prescription drugs](#), [bankruptcy laws](#) and [PBGC rules](#). The final document in the folder was 20 pages of [hardship testimonies](#) extracted from 75 pages of emails provide in response to the NRLN's request. To add credibility with members of Congress for the personal accounts, the first and last names were included in the folders. The names have been removed from the attachment so that you may share them with your association's members if you wish.

NRLN Board Members and Retiree Association Leaders can be proud of the way the conferees represented our organizations as they went from meeting to meeting in the House and Senate office buildings.

Bill Kadereit, NRLN President