

# **Report on Capitol Hill Lobbying Session, and a Request for Feedback (10/23/16)**

As indicated in my last email to our membership, Paul Kende and I attended the NRLN (National Retiree Legislative Network) Fly-In event in Washington, DC, Sept. 26 – 28. DuPont retiree Vijay Kumar also attended one of our Capitol Hill visits. It was a well-structured event, and we had the opportunity to advocate for legislation protecting retiree income, as well as to make valuable personal contacts with executive staff of both NRLN and the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC).

Here is a high level summary of the legislative proposals we gave to various Congressional Delegations:

- 1. NRLN's proposals to provide protections for pension plan participants in pension plan mergers:** mergers should be
  - reportable to PBGC
  - subject to pre-approval;
  - not be permitted to reduce minimum funding contributions for 5 years;
  - be subject to enhanced scrutiny in distress terminations
- 2. NRLN's proposals to protect retirees in corporate mergers, acquisitions and spinoffs:** the PBGC should have broader and more flexible authority to address spin-offs or other transactions that greatly increase the risk of future loss to the PBGC and participants, including required advance notice, preapproval, and enforcing liens against US based assets of foreign sponsors.
- 3. NRLN urges passage of:**
  - the Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act of 2015, pending in Congressional Committees, which would reduce the cost of prescription drugs;
  - the Safe and Affordable Drugs from Canada Act of 2015, which have languished in the Senate and House Committees since 2015.

In addition, the Secretary of Health and Human Services has the authority (under the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003) to issue an order, to begin legal importation from Canada; we submitted an NRLN letter to our representatives to send to the Secretary, urging her to exercise her authority.

- 4. NRLN is proposing some changes to the Annual Funding Notices,** for improved clarity and transparency, to better inform pension plan participants on the status of their pension plan.

These proposals were fully developed in a concise but comprehensive package, with Executive Summaries and legislative language to facilitate initiation of corresponding bills. You can soon review the key documents in full detail at [www.nrln.org](http://www.nrln.org) under the [Legislative Agenda tab](#). The complete package was left behind for our legislators to review and decide whether they will support them, and then get back to us with questions and the path forward.

These issues are important to all US retirees including DuPont's. For a new Chapter like DRC, it was valuable for us to see how NRLN works to define the issues and develop the proposals to address them, and then get all its Chapters and Associations aligned to take our message to various Congressional Delegations. We learned a great deal about lobbying Congress for issues important to retirees. Through PBGC's presentations and our personal conversations with their senior staff, we have gained some insights about their role, capabilities and limitations, some of which are addressed by the legislative proposals.

Although Representatives and Senators were working under a deadline to recess before the end of the week and get back home to campaign, we were able to meet to with Delaware Senator Tom Carper and Iowa Senator Chuck Grassley. They listened to a brief summary of the NRLN's proposals on pension protections and prescription drug price gouging before asking us to go over the proposals in more detail with their staffs. While Delaware Senator Chris Coons and Congressman John Carney were not available, we reviewed our proposals with their staff. ([Click here to see photos from two of our meetings.](#))

With political gridlock, and the upcoming election and lame duck session, we cannot reasonably expect rapid action on any legislative proposals. However, our proposals are not politically sensitive or controversial, and our representatives and their staffs seemed keenly interested in them. Creating legislative change is difficult and slow, but we can't expect progress if we don't try - we will continue to press our politicians to improve the legal protection of retirees' income security, because we know from the experience of others, that when companies restructure businesses, post-merger/split decisions to save cost can lead to significant adjustments to retiree pension and healthcare benefits. I am looking forward to attending the March NRLN Annual Leadership Conference in Washington, DC, and going to Capitol Hill again to advocate issues important to all retirees.

Finally, I have provided directions below for making contributions to the NRLN. We deferred asking for contributions for 3 months, to give you a chance to see the value – but now it is time. I think NRLN is a very valuable resource for DuPont retirees and ask you to please consider making a contribution. Twenty percent of the contributions from our chapter members will be credited to our DuPont Retirees Chapter account, held by NRLN, which can cover various chapter expenses (travel to lobbying events, catering for meetings, printing, etc., as needed). Our current reserves are \$2500 (provided by NRLN at Chapter start up) less our recent travel expenses to Washington, DC for the Fly-In.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

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