



***NRLN Review*, Summary for September 2019**

The *NRLN Review* provides a monthly report on National Retiree Legislative Network actions, events in Congress and important retirement news.

NRLN Fly-In Attendees Advocate Retirement Issues

Prepared by a Monday, September 23, briefing session and armed with proposals in folders, attendees at the fall NRLN Fly-In to Washington, DC spread out across Capitol Hill on Tuesday and Wednesday, September 24 and 25, to advocate for important retirement issues. They addressed with Representatives, Senators and/or members of their staffs:

- Traditional Medicare Should Have Access to Medicare Advantage Benefits.
- Support for Bills to Reduce Prescription Drug Prices: Talk Is Cheap – Drugs Are Not.
- Congress Should Mandate Competitive Bidding on Prescription Drugs.
- Support for Passage of Social Security 2100 Act.

One group of attendees was selected to target some members of Congress with NRLN proposals on:

- Protecting Retirees from Pension Plan Benefit Recoupment. (Limiting exposure to payback for pension calculation errors, including proposed legislative amendments.)
- Protecting Retirees in Pension Plan De-risking (When a pension is converted to an annuity.)
- Protecting Retirees from Risks in Corporate Mergers, Acquisitions and Spin-off. (Including proposed legislative amendments.)

Click here <https://www.nrln.org/919photos.html> to view 10 photos of the lobbying on Capitol Hill. A detailed report, with photos, on the Fly-In will be in the upcoming fall NRLN FOCUS newsletter.

Two NRLN Action Alerts Issued

On September 9, an Action Alert was issued, **Tell Congress to Support Passage of Social Security 2100 Act**. The Action Alert was the result of the NRLN's Legislative Affairs Committee (LAC) and the Legislative Action Planning Committee (LAPC) doing an extensive review of the Social Security bills that have been introduced in the current 116th session of Congress. **H.R. 860 / S. 269, the Social Security 2100 Act** comes the closest to the NRLN's "Grand Bargain" proposal to make Social Security financially strong for our generation, our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

On September 16, an Action Alert was issued, **Tell Congress Do Not Give Taxpayer Subsidies to Insurers for Privatizing Medicare**. From 1997 to 2018, Congress provided Medicare Advantage (MA) \$380 billion in subsidies paid to insurers. The NRLN believes this is a foolish effort to privatize Medicare and adding benefits

for only the 21.3 million MA enrollees while denying them to 38.2 million seniors in original Medicare is discriminatory.

If you have not responded to these two Action Alerts, go to www.nrln.org and click on the red flashing icon "Respond to an Action Alert".

NRLN Legislative Committees' Work

The NRLN's Legislative Affairs Committee (LAC) composed of Judy Stenberg, Chairwoman, Deb Morrissett, Joe Mazzei, Al Duscher and Bob Martina submitted the following bills for the Legislative Action Planning Committee (LAPC) to consider for action during its September 9 conference call.

- S.1416 -- Affordable Prescriptions for Patients Act of 2019
- H.R.1730 / S.741 -- Cancer Drug Parity Act of 2019
- H.R.3924 / S.1861 -- Streamlining Part D Appeals Process Act
- S.2081 -- Stop Drug Companies from Overcharging Seniors in Medicare Part B Act of 2019

The LAC also reviewed and then tabled and will monitor the following bills:

- H.R.1084 -- The Family Savings Act of 2019
- H.R.2654 -- Strengthening Social Security Act of 2019
- S.1927 -- Expanding Access to Retirement Act of 2019

The LAPC composed of Bill Kadereit, Chairman, Alyson Parker, Judy Stenberg, Bob Martina and Ed Beltram made the following decisions on its September 9 conference call.

- On September 10, emailed letters to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (KY) and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (NY) requesting a Senate vote on **S. 1416 Affordable Prescriptions for Patients Act of 2019** which was approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee on June 28, 2019.
- On September 11, emailed letters to Chairman Frank Pallone (NJ-08) and Ranking Member Greg Walden (OR-02) requesting a vote in the House Energy and Commerce Committee on **H.R. 1730, Cancer Drug Parity Act of 2019** and **H.R. 3924, Streamlining Part D Appeals Process Act**.
- On September 11, emailed letters to Chairman Lamar Alexander (TN) and Ranking Member Patty Murray (WA) requesting a vote on the companion bill **S. 741, Cancer Drug Parity Act of 2019** in Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.
- September 11, emailed letters to Chairman Richard Neal (MA-01) and Ranking Member Kevin Brady (TX-08) requesting vote in the House Ways and Means Committee on **H.R. 3924, Streamlining Part D Appeals Process Act**.
- On September 11, emailed letters to Chairman Chuck Grassley (IA) and Ranking Member Ron Wyden, requesting a vote in Senate Finance Committee on companion bill **S.1861, Streamlining Part D Appeals Process Act**.
- No Action on **S. 2081, Stop Drug Companies from Overcharging Seniors in Medicare Part B Act of 2019**, because Senator Gary Peters (MI) on July 25, 2019 applauded the Senate Finance Committee's approval of **Prescription Drug Pricing Reduction Act (PDPRA)** that included provisions of his **S. 2081** bill to hold drug companies accountable and help lower the cost of health care for seniors. The NRLN supports the **Prescription Drug Pricing Reduction Act (PDPRA)**.

The letters are posted on the NRLN website in "[Letters to Washington](#)".

<https://www.nrln.org/archives2.html#ltrswash> See whether your Representative and Senators are a cosponsor of these bills. Click on your state in the "[Legislative Action Network](#)" Directory.

<https://www.nrln.org/SE.html/congresslegs.html#/legislators/> When the names and photos of your state's Congressional delegation appears, click on the "EXCEL DOWNLOAD" button near the top of the webpage.

Links to Key News Articles Posted in September

During September, ___ links to news articles related to retirement issues were researched and posted daily IN THE NEWS on the NRLN website home page at www.nrln.org. All the articles remain available by scrolling down IN THE NEWS. Here are examples of the headlines:

Protect Yourself from Healthcare Rip-Offs – Sept. 2

The war over Medicare Advantage audits heats up – Sept. 3

Former Senator Heidi Heitkamp: Protect pensions now for millions of Americans – Sept. 3

Fraud Alert: Genetic Testing Scam – Sept. 4

Trump Promises ‘Phenomenal’ Health Plan. What Might That Mean? – Sept. 4

Medicare Advantage home healthcare may not be best quality – Sept. 5

Avoiding the Long-Term-Care Catastrophe – Sept. 6

Pelosi draft plan would allow negotiation on 250 drugs per year: summary – Sept. 9

Drug Prices Keep Rising Amid Political Pressure, But Not As Fast – Sept. 10

How to Correct This Big Medicare Mistake – Sept. 11

Your Social Security checks could get bigger next year. Here’s how much – Sept. 12

FDA warns of contaminant in popular heartburn medicine – Sept. 13

The New Medicare Plan Finder Doesn’t Make Finding Your Best Drug Coverage Easy – Sept. 14

Stakes Are High As Congress Aims To Tackle Array Of Health Issues Before End Of The Year – Sept. 16

Is The New Medicare Plan Finder Putting Seniors In Jeopardy? – Sept. 17

Seniors will soon have their own IRS tax form – Sept. 19

Pelosi offers Medicare negotiation plan to curb drug prices – Sept. 19

Drug prices for seniors once again rose faster than inflation – Sept. 23

Warning: You Can Be Taxed Higher In Retirement -- How To Stop That – Sept. 23

3 New Retirement Rules That May Change Retirement As We Know It – Sept. 25

The 2020 Social Security COLA is expected to be low — and that’s not even the worst part – Sept. 26

KHN Files Lawsuit To Force Feds To Disclose Medicare Advantage Audits – Sept. 27

Trump to give health care speech in Florida next week – Sept. 28

Enrolling in a Medicare prescription drug plan? You’ll need extra time, advocates say – Sept. 29

CVS halts sales of heartburn drug Zantac over cancer concerns – Sept. 30