

SPECIAL



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NRLN Focus

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NRLN
NATIONAL RETIREE LEGISLATIVE NETWORK, INC.

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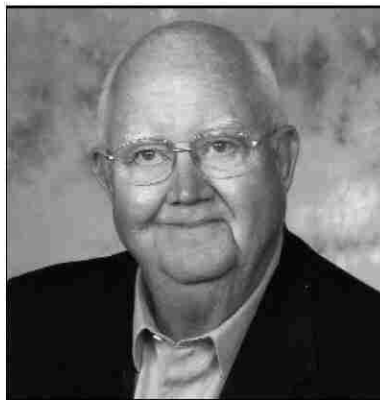
A VIEW FROM WASHINGTON

In this "Special Edition" of the FOCUS, we wish to announce a major change in policy.

When the other organization founders and I sat down in Washington, D.C., some years ago and mapped out the basic framework of the NRLN, we committed ourselves to the idea that we would have a single purpose and mission. Our vision was to do legislatively whatever we could to protect and enhance retirees and pre-retirees in the retention of their benefits that they had worked so hard to earn.

Among other things, we were not going to get involved with or be distracted by money-making subsidiaries like the other retiree organization. We would be a pure retiree group and rely on a modest dues structure and donations for revenue. We would get along as best we could with volunteers.

It wasn't long before we realized that we were not going to get anywhere in Washington until we learned how to gain and maintain contact with members of Congress and their staffs. This meant hiring and managing a staff of Washington experts who are familiar with the legislative process inside the Beltway. As I've shared with you before, that activity can cost a lot of money.



A. J. (Jim) Norby

Significant inroads

In spite of our modest budget, we have made significant inroads with Congress. They know who we are and what we do, and they have come to respect us for that. I have reported to you our successes and our failures on a regular basis in this publication. There is no doubt that we have had a positive impact in Washington on behalf of the retirees we represent, and we can be proud of our achievements.

The leadership of the NRLN has concluded that we must do more to realize our mission and legislative objectives. We've had some success, but we simply must do more. And to do so means expanding our presence in Washington. Furthermore, we

have concluded that we can't do significantly better with our dues level and donations, as good and generous as they have been.

For eight years, we have survived with an array of volunteers, such as our Grassroots Network, which remains the fundamental strength of the NRLN. Nonetheless, we feel it's time to move forward and intensify our activities in Washington.

The Board of the NRLN, with the concurrence of the leadership among the affiliated member retiree associations, has voted to establish a "for profit" subsidiary to manage various products and services offered to our members and others. We undertake this action for three fundamental reasons:

- To provide "value added" programs to our constituency.
- To provide products and services to our older population, which they might not otherwise know about or can't afford.
- To provide a new revenue stream to both our member organizations and the NRLN so as to enhance our ability to perform our Washington, D.C., mission.

The first offering will be two insurance products: life insur-
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A View from Washington *(continued from page 1)*

ance and related financial products, and casualty insurance (home, auto, etc.). These are products most of us need for one reason or another.

In the case of life insurance, you will be able to buy ordinary life insurance policies at almost any age and, depending on circumstances, at very competitive premium levels (the result of our endorsement of these companies). Our agreement with our casualty insurance vendor allows for a discount of up to \$327 per year. (The exact savings will depend upon coverage needed and the state in which you reside.)

In the near future, I think you can expect the NRLN to endorse a health insurance plan. We have formed a “study group” to explore our options. Each week, it seems another group of retirees is informed that their former employer is reducing or even canceling health care coverage that was promised and earned.

Due diligence

A special committee composed of NRLN Board members invested many months in a “due diligence” and research to find the best possible organizations with which to partner. Financial standing, integrity, rate structures, distribution ability, and service were among the criteria used in

our final recommendation to the Board. The two companies are:

- **Lindblad Financial Group** of Phoenix, Ariz. (www.lindbladfinancial.com), which will have the exclusive endorsement on matters of life insurance. Daniel Lindblad, CLU, who represents and is licensed with all the major insurance companies in America, is uniquely qualified to consider individual insurance needs. For more information call 1-800-355-2557.

- **Liberty Mutual** (www.libertymutual.com) is our casualty company of choice. It is among the best of the larger insurance companies in the country. For information call 1-800-524-9400. *(continued on page 4)*

NRLN Datelines

July 12, 2007 – NRLN issued an Action Alert calling for Grassroots Advocates to immediately send letters to the U.S. House of Representatives urging their support of H.R. 380, the Pharmaceutical Market Access and Drug Safety Act, by bringing it to the House floor for debate and a vote. The bill provides for the importation of safe prescription drugs from Canada, Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Japan. The effect of this legislation would be to lower prices for prescription drugs in the U.S.

June 19, 2007 – NRLN President A.J. “Jim” Norby sends letters to U.S. Reps. Rahm Emanuel (D-Ill.) and Jo Ann H. Emerson (R-Mo.) in appreciation of their sponsorship of H.R. 380, the Pharmaceutical Market Access and Drug Safety Act of 2007.

June 11, 2007 – NRLN issued a news release criticizing a recent Third Circuit Court of Appeals ruling that allows employers to reduce health benefits for retirees when they become eligible for Medicare. The unanimous decision by the Philadelphia-based court ruled on June 4 that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has the legal authority to create a regulation that would exempt employer coordination of retirement benefits with Medicare benefits from the federal Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA). The EEOC had issued the early retiree health benefits exemption regulation in 2004. The AARP had filed a lawsuit challenging the EEOC’s rule. The EEOC is the federal agency created to prevent discrimination, including age discrimination.

April 13, 2007 – NRLN issued a news release criticizing the U.S. Senate Finance Committee’s approval of a bill that does not mandate negotiations for lower prescription drug prices for Medicare participants.

March 9, 2007 – NRLN President A.J. “Jim” Norby sent a letter to U.S. Sen. Byron L. Dorgan (D-N.D.) endorsing the Pharmaceutical Market Access and Drug Safety Act of 2007 (S. 242), which would allow Americans to purchase lower-priced and safe prescription drugs from Canada and other Western industrialized nations. The same issue was addressed in a letter to U.S. Sen. Thomas R. Carper (D-Del.)



NRLN HEALTH CARE UPDATE

Health care continues to be one of the most visible and hotly debated issues before Congress this session. Members of Congress are pursuing two different, yet related, tacks in their approach to health care. In addition to examining how the system affects all age groups from children through seniors, congressional members are dealing with various programs on an individual basis.

The NRLN has been raising the awareness of our congressional representatives to the plight of retirees who have been abandoned by their former employers. To that end, the NRLN has proposed that a hearing be held on the issue of employers who cancel health care benefits for their retirees, who are then left uninsured. This issue is a growing concern for retirees, which is why the NRLN is pushing vigorously for an opportunity to raise these concerns at an appropriate level.

The NRLN has also been on the Hill to discuss ways to encourage companies to maintain the health care benefits they promised their retirees. Year after year, more companies are dropping the health care benefits they promised to their retirees. While current law allows them to do this, the NRLN is seeking suitable enticements that encourage these companies to

“Year after year, more companies are dropping the health care benefits they promised to their retirees.”

keep their promises to retirees. In doing so, companies and Congress can hopefully reach a mutually beneficial solution that eases the pressure on retirees who are being crushed under the burden of increasing health care costs.

Prescription drug reform

The cost of prescription drugs has also been an increasing burden on retirees. It has been estimated that approximately 40 million people in this country are without prescription drug coverage. Especially hard hit are retirees who need access to life-saving medications.

For this reason, the NRLN has been working with leaders on Capitol Hill to pass the

Pharmaceutical Market Access and Drug Safety Act (S. 242 and H.R. 380). The bill would allow U.S.-licensed pharmacies and drug wholesalers to import FDA-approved prescription drugs from Canada, Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Japan, where the price of prescription drugs is 35 percent to 55 percent lower. The pharmacies could then pass along the savings to prescription drug users in the U.S.

In July, the NRLN Grassroots Advocates sent letters to U.S. House of Representative members urging them to bring the Pharmaceutical Market Access and Drug Safety Act to the House floor for debate and a vote. The legislation provides for prescription drug imports only from qualified suppliers in Canada, Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Japan. Without passage of H.R. 380, we will continue paying up to five times as much for the same medicines purchased by citizens of other countries.

Under this bill, Americans will benefit from lower prices at their local pharmacies or FDA-inspected Canadian pharmacies. Without this legislation, the cost of prescription drugs will continue to increase at alarming rates, leaving many senior citizens in this country without the medicine they need to live comfortably and safely on a daily basis.

“It has been estimated that approximately 40 million people in this country are without prescription drug coverage. Especially hard hit are retirees who need access to life-saving medications.”

*A View from Washington (continued from page 2)*

We are proud to partner with these two fine organizations. It's important to note that we have been especially aware of the sensitivity of our members when it comes to unsolicited calling and e-mailing. You will not receive any unwanted phone calls or e-mails. In the case of Liberty Mutual, you may receive by mail a special announcement about NRLN's special discounted offer.

The burden of response is with you if you're interested in further information. The same is true for life insurance. You may receive from your own association an invitation to attend a seminar, sponsored by your association, to learn about the insurance programs. You may also receive some notification

from your association to call an "800" number for information – you will not be burdened with unsolicited calls or e-mails about life insurance.

In summary, let me emphasize that in my view, the financial health of the NRLN rests with the level of success of this program. As noted above, we all need some insurance coverage. Why not consider the NRLN-sponsored vendors? They are both first-rate companies managed by first-rate people.

Let's all get behind this program and make it a success. My family and I, and several Board members, are already busy making plans to utilize these companies.

God Speed and Good Luck.

National Retiree Legislative Network, Inc.

We seek to secure federal legislation that will guarantee the fair and equitable treatment of retirees in the private and public sectors and health and pension programs, and will improve the adequacy of benefits provided by such programs. Also, we are committed to watching for and stopping legislation that threatens retiree health and pension programs.

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