



CHAPTER 236 SOUTH PUGET SOUND

2023 CHAPTER MEETING DATES AT 12 NOON VIA ZOOM

16 MAY
18 JULY
17 OCTOBER

Election of officers will be at the 17 October meeting.

Chapter website: narfewardistiv.org/Olympia-chapter236

The ZOOM link will be sent out via email shortly before 16 May.

President's Message

As we enter May 2023, we continue to encounter more fresh challenges to our organization which by all accounts will continue into the foreseeable future. Congress continues to assail "America's Heartbeat" from every possible angle. Currently there is a stand-off between the Administration and Congress as to raising the debt ceiling. In past years raising the debt ceiling was routine. Now it is a political fight over how to reduce government spending. The Debt Limit Playbook for many members of Congress includes Federal Employee benefits high on the list of targets to cut. These include compute employee retirement annuities based on the highest 5 years of service rather than 3 years; increasing employee share of contributions to FERS and reducing or even eliminating COLA's to FERS and CSRS annuities; eliminating the FERS annuity supplement; reducing the rate of return of the TSP G fund; creating a TSP type retirement system, voucherize the government share of the FEHB premium, and implement the Chained - CPI as the measure of the annual COLA's. The Chained - CPI is based on the mix of goods that consumers actually buy rather than on a fixed basket of goods. The BLS conducts price surveys using both systems. The Chained - CPI is considered a more accurate gauge of the cost of living. On the other hand, it is a less timely indicator and a less accurate measure of the current rate of inflation.

Based on what is happening in DC at this time, we as a chapter must continue to make our voices heard by Congress. It doesn't matter if you write a letter in longhand or with a pencil and pen, pick up the phone to call your local Member of Congress's office, or log on and use the wonderful GEMS service provided on the NARFE website. **WHATEVER** the method, **MAKE YOUR CONCERNS KNOWN!!!** The numbers recorded of those who have contacted Congress in recent years is not what would be expected of an organization with a charter dedicated to political activism. We are as strong as we can make ourselves. Once again, please call or write to your Member of Congress on those issues which affect you most as a federal retiree.

Treasurer's Report

The 31 March balance is \$14,877.68.

Membership

Our chapter membership is 156. For the period from 1 February to 31 March: There were 2 new members, Karen Swift of Hoodspport and Duncan Lloyd of Bonney Lake. A hearty welcome to our new NARFE members. In April, Margaret Pfeifer of Seattle transferred her membership to 236. Welcome to Margaret. During the same period 10 members renewed and 1 member Florence De Silva passed away. Our condolences to her family. Our chapter member numbers are gradually shrinking. When you have the opportunity promoting NARFE membership to an eligible friend or acquaintance is a desirable something to do. NARFE performs a vital role in advocating before Congress our interests as retirees and active federal workers. So, if you know someone who works or worked for the Feds, use your persuasive powers on them to join NARFE.

Chapter Meetings

Because of the Covid Pandemic chapter meetings have been held via zoom. We can begin to hold in-person meetings at local restaurants in either Olympia or Tacoma if there is enough interest. Please contact any of the chapter officers listed below as to your preference. We will also begin to invite local speakers on topics of interest to our meetings. Let us know what topics might interest you. Volunteers are needed for the vacant positions located at the end. Chapter 236 began in 1953 it would be a shame for it to close after all these years. Copies of the NARFE Magazine are needed to hand out at the health fairs in the fall. Our Membership Chair Bonnie Ecker is willing to pick them up from you if you live in Lacey/Olympia/Tacoma area if you can save your copies this year. The mission of NARFE is to support the Federal retirees. Let us know what we can do for you at the local level.

COLA UPDATE

The March CPI-W value is 296.021. This represents to date a 1.4% increase in the 2024 COLA according to the NARFE website.

LEG CON 23

LEG Con is NARFE's premier grassroots training event on how members can promote NARFE's legislative agenda to your members of Congress will be held in June. The conference is a virtual event. The link to registration information is on the home page of NARFE's website. The cost is \$150. The Washington State Federation will reimburse you for the registration fee. If interested, contact the Federation president Cray Henry at: wsf.Cray.Henry@gmail.com before you complete the online registration. Include your name, NARFE membership # (if you know it), your chapter name and number and your role (if any) and your return email address. Cray Henry will send you an email confirming the federation will reimburse your registration cost and instructions how to submit a claim.

Legislative Action

Senator Sherrod, D-OH, and Senator Susan Collins, R-ME reintroduced the Senate version of the Social Security Fairness Act, S. 597. This bill would fully repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO). It has 38 cosponsors and was assigned to the Committee on Senate Finance. The House Companion bill, H.R. 82 has 232 cosponsors and languishes in the House Committee on Ways and Means. Legislation has been submitted in both houses, Saving the Civil Service Act, H.R. 1002 and Senate bill S.399, to prevent the return of schedule F, a statutory loophole created by the previous administration which would change several thousand civil service jobs to political appointment status, the old spoils system. Neither H.R. 2002 nor S. 399 are cosponsored by any Washington State congressional representatives. Please ask your senators and representatives to cosponsor these bills.

Alzheimer's

The dates for the annual Walk to End Alzheimer's are now available: Olympia – Sept 16; Tacoma Sept 23; Seattle Sept 30. Forms to make contributions to Alzheimer's research are on page 43 Of the April NARFE Magazine. Be sure you write our chapter number 236 on the memo line of your check and on the donation form.

OPM Begins Process to Establish the USPS Health Benefits Program

OPM has begun accepting applications from health insurance companies to be part of the USPS health benefits program. The new program is effective 1 January 2025. Unlike the existing FEHB program the USPS employees and retirees will apply directly with OPM through an online portal to select insurance coverage. During the open season period in Fall 2024, eligible postal workers and retirees will have the opportunity to select their new coverage. The CBO estimates the new program will lead to lower average costs for both postal and other Federal employees. You can find a more information on the NARFE website under Advocacy and Issue Briefs and Fact Sheets.

Public Service Recognition Week May 7 – 13

We encourage members to write letters to the editor of their local newspaper thanking public service employees at all levels of government for their dedication and commitment to serving our nation. These unsung heroes, numbering over 24 million play a key role in supporting over 330 million Americans.

Be Prepared for Life Event's

We all know we don't live forever. Frequently though it is easy to put off to another day taking the time to let someone know what to do in the event of our death or disability when we can no longer handle our affairs or able to communicate our desires as to how we live or what medical care we want. On the NARFE website there is a Form F100, Be Prepared for Life Events, where you can list just about every piece of information for whomever you will want to handle your estate in event of death or speak for you in event of disability. You can find the form on the NARFE Home Page, click on For Members, Office Resources, All Forms by Form Numbers, and scroll down to F100, Be Prepared for Life Events. The form is fillable, or you can print it out blank and complete it.

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