

CHAPTER 236

SOUTH PUGET SOUND

CHAPTER MEETING DATE AT 12 NOON

15 October

Location: McNamara's Pub & Eatery, 1595 Wilmington Dr, DuPont

Chapter website: [narfewadistiv.org/Olympia-chapter 236](http://narfewadistiv.org/Olympia-chapter-236).

Federation Website: www.narfe.org/wa

President's Message – Tony Merola

We are in a particularly challenging, turbulent and worrisome election year at present. Among other things, I remain concerned about two pieces of legislation which concern federal personnel policies and procedures. HR 3115, S 1496, Public Service Reform Act, would make all federal employees at will and enable workers to be removed for cause. This bill would abolish the Merit Systems Protection Board and severely restrict removal appeals to whistleblower retaliation claims and EEOC complaints before the US Court of Appeals. HR 5779 and S3262. The Fiscal Commission Act, and the Fiscal Stability Act, would formally establish a commission on stability and reform. These pieces of legislation, which NARFE strongly opposes, would severely gut the Civil Services ability to conduct the nation's business, slash departmental funding, and destroy the organizational integrity of our federal family and reduce it to a spoils system, undoing every step ever made in civil service reform from 1871 onwards. Please pay close attention to what your congresspeople are doing. As I have said before, your NARFE publication is full of useful information on the tracking progress of important legislation affecting us.

As a non-partisan organization, NARFE focuses on policy, not politics. NARFE encourages voting as a fundamental aspect of civic engagement. By voting, members can help elect officials whose views align with those issues that federal employees care about. NARFE provides nonpartisan information about candidates' positions on issues relevant to us. This approach helps members make informed decisions at the ballot box. In short, VOTE!

Take the time to write an action letter about an issue you care about. As you obtain background information on an issue, a straightforward way to do this is to access NARFE's legislation action page which provides useful letter templates to personalize your letter as proper. The way you create a message, whether via a congressional website "plug and play" icon on their website, a personal e-mail, a phone call to your local congressional office or a handwritten letter is up to you. But please let your congressperson know how you feel.

Membership

Our chapter membership is 149. For the period from 1 May 24 to 29 August, 14 members renewed. We gained 3 new members, Dennis B [REDACTED] of Tacoma, Elaine J [REDACTED] of Federal Way and Susan S [REDACTED] of Spanaway. A hearty welcome to our new chapter members. Five members were dropped for non-renewal.

Our chapter member numbers are holding steady. If 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. Give them a NARFE magazine and show them the application for membership.

COLA UPDATE

The July CPI-W index value of 308.501 is a 2.41% increase from the third quarter 2023 average of 301.236. It is likely the 2025 COLA for social security and CSRS annuities will be in the 2% range which means the smallest increase in the past several years. The FERS COLA will be 2% as increases between 2% and 3% are reduced to 2%.

Treasurers' Report

The July 31 balance is \$15,264.51. Your annual chapter membership fee is \$7. This is included in the NARFE's annual fee and is forwarded to our chapter by NARFE.

Alzheimer's

NARFE members raised a combined total of \$23,625.37 in national fundraising in June. As of June, 2024, the grand total was \$16,277,464.50. Forms to make contributions to Alzheimer's research are in every NARFE Magazine. Be sure you write our chapter number 236 on the memo line of your check and on the donation form.

The 2024 Olympia Walk to End Alzheimer's is scheduled for 14 September at Heritage Park on 5th Ave. Registration begins at 9 am and the walk begins at 10:30 am. The Olympia Walk is 2.0 miles. The Pierce County Walk is 5 October at Dune Peninsula Point Defiance Park. Registration begins at 10 am and the walk at 11:30.

According to a recent study by Mass General Brigham researchers, any Alzheimer's disease in the mother was related to a higher risk of Alzheimer's in her children. On the father's side, only early-onset Alzheimer's disease was related to a higher risk of Alzheimer's for their children. Early-onset Alzheimer's is classified as an occurrence of the disease in patients younger than age 65, according to the Alzheimer's Association. As of 2024, about 6.9 million Americans have Alzheimer's disease, according to the Alzheimer's Association. The risk of developing dementia doubles every five years after age 65, and by age 85 roughly one in three Americans will suffer from dementia, most of them women, the Alzheimer's Association said. Mass General Brigham researchers analyzed 4,400 cognitively unimpaired adults with amyloid imaging and found increased amyloid in those who reported their mothers had symptoms of Alzheimer's disease.

Legislative

As Congress left town for the August recess, committees had made progress on advancing the fiscal year 2025 appropriations bills, but neither the House nor Senate passed a majority of the 12 bills.

The Senate Appropriations Committee has advanced eleven bills leaving only the Homeland Security appropriations bill unfinished. All the bills advanced by the committee enjoyed broad bipartisan support. The full Senate has yet to take up any bill, as its rules require House action first on spending bills.

Before leaving for recess, the House Appropriations Committee had advanced all 12 of its bills and the full House passed four on the floor. With committee work in both chambers mostly done, most of the details of the funding bills are prepped for bicameral negotiations. But there is still no deal on topline levels, and the consensus expectation on the Hill is that Congress will pass a continuing resolution in September to extend funding past the November elections, leaving final negotiations for the lame-duck session (or into the next Congress).

CIVIL SERVICE RETIREMENT STATISTICS

Source Congressional Research Service FY2022 Report: 1) Retirement Coverage, FERS 98.4% of workforce; 2) Number of annuitants: 2,226,760 employee annuitants; 475,562 survivor annuitants; 3) 1970 962,000 combined employee and survivor annuitants; 4) 62.3: The average age at retirement; 5) 26.1 The average length of service at retirement; CSRS: 39.2; FERS 23.6; 6) The average monthly annuity not including SS or TSP: FERS: \$2,126; CSRS: \$5,447; 7) Balance of the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund, AKA, the Civil Service Trust Fund: 1990: \$238 billion; 2022: \$1.1 trillion, an increase of 372% over 32 years; 8) Age of current federal employees: CSRS; all are 55 or older, CSRS: 91% are 60 or older: FERS: 32% are age 55 or older and 15% are age 60 or older.

NARFE-PAC NEWS

In this election season it is good to remind members that NARFE is a non-partisan organization. It does not endorse candidates for president and supports only those candidates for congress whether Democrat or Republican who support the issues important to Federal retired and active employees that NARFE supports.

To learn more about NARFE-PAC, go to www.narfe.org click on Advocacy and NARFE PAC and you can find information about who has received your contributions and data on how much individual Chapters and Federations have contributed. EVERY DOLLAR COUNTS!!

FEDERAL BENEFITS INSTITUTE

The Benefits Institute is a members-only resource designed to help members take charge of their federal benefits. NARFE experts aid members to resolve issues surrounding annuities, insurance, Medicare, Social Security and more. They, also several times a year, conduct a WEBINAIR on these issues. A recent WEBINAIR on TSP, Should You Stay or Should You Go is available to view on the on the archive of past webinars on the NARFE website for viewing on You Tube.

Federation Voting

Voting for Federation officers will begin on September 18. Go to the federation website at www.narfe.org/wa for the ballot or contact Bea Bull at email tbkbull@gmail.com for a paper ballot. Our chapter president will be on the ballot for federation president.

May Meeting Speaker

At the May Meeting Katie Strozyk, the Opioid Response Coordinator for the Thurston County Public Health Department gave an excellent presentation on the fentanyl overdose epidemic. This is a topic of great importance. If you would like to know more on this topic, contact Mary Traxler at her email address below and she will provide you with a written copy.

Chapter Officers

President – Tony Merola – 253-564-0086
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