



# NARFE Advocacy Amid Continued Threats and Historic Success

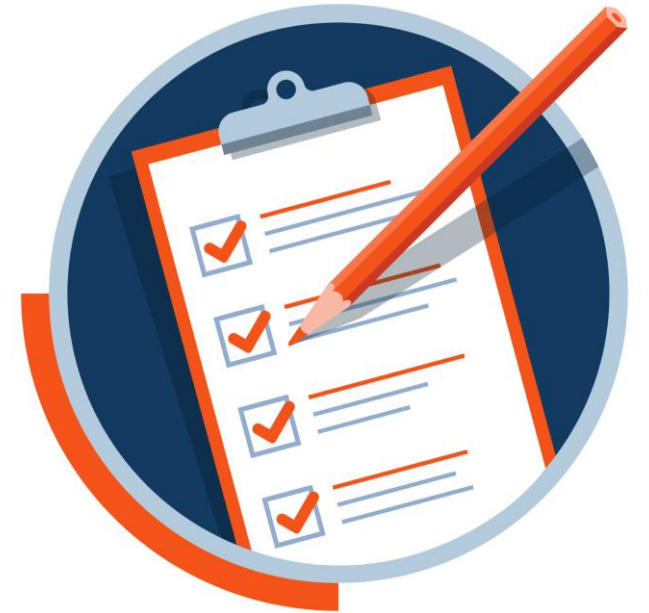
2025 Federation Presidents Meeting  
August 12, 2025

Presented by John Hatton, SVP, Policy and Programs, NARFE

# Agenda



- **Recap of 2024 Efforts**
- **Advocacy Priorities**
- **Advocacy Actions Summary**
- **Questions & Answers**



# Recap of 2024 Efforts



## Social Security Fairness Act, H.R.82/S.597

- **Repeals Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO)**
  - WEP reduces primary Social Security benefit for individuals with noncovered pension (Civil Service Retirement System annuity)
  - GPO reduces or eliminates spousal/survivor benefits for individuals with noncovered pension (CSRS annuity)
- **NARFE Priority for More Than 40 years**



## Social Security Fairness Act, H.R.82/S.597

- **Advocacy Efforts Built Support for Bill**
  - Momentum from previous Congress
    - Committee advanced bill for first time ever in 2022
  - Most cosponsored bill in Congress
    - 330 House cosponsors
    - 62 Senate cosponsors
  - 3 Congressional Hearings (2 House, 1 Senate)





## Social Security Fairness Act, H.R. 82

- **Limited Reform Offer from House Ways and Means**
  - Relief from 2028 through 2032
  - About \$50 per month increase in benefits for WEP
  - Phased in relief for GPO if combined monthly income \$3,000 or less
  - Pays for via administrative changes (but not bipartisan)
- **Push for Committee Markup Shifted to Discharge Petition in House; Floor Vote in Senate**



## Social Security Fairness Act, H.R. 82

- **Graves & Spanberger filed Discharge Petition on September 10**
  - Hit 218 signatures on September 19!!!
    - Achieved in a little more than one week
  - Forced House Floor Vote
- **House Passed Bill on November 12 by a vote of 327-75**



## Social Security Fairness Act, H.R. 82

- **Push for Senate Vote**
  - Capitol Hill Rally on December 11 – Schumer commits to floor vote
- **Senate Consideration**
  - Invoked Cloture on Motion to Proceed by 73-27 vote on December 18
  - Passed Bill on December 21, 76-20 vote
- **President Biden Signed into Law on January 5, 2025**





## Additional Priorities

- **No Cuts to Earned Federal Benefits**
  - No vote on Republican Study Committee budget
    - RSC budget included proposed cuts to benefits
  - No cuts included in budget deal to extend debt limit
  - No “Fiscal Commission” created
- **Increased Cosponsors for Equal COLA Act**
  - From 34 to 95 cosponsors in House, 6 to 11 in Senate
  - Would provide full cost-of-living adjustments





## Additional Priorities

- **Improving OPM Retirement Services**
  - Oversight from appropriations
  - Reduced backlogs
  - Modernization occurring, needs acceleration



- **Advocating for Choice for Postal Health Benefits**
  - Argued for choice regarding Medicare Part D
  - Exception provided for those living overseas
  - Enrollment flexibility

# Advocacy Priorities



## Social Security Fairness Act, P.L. 118-273

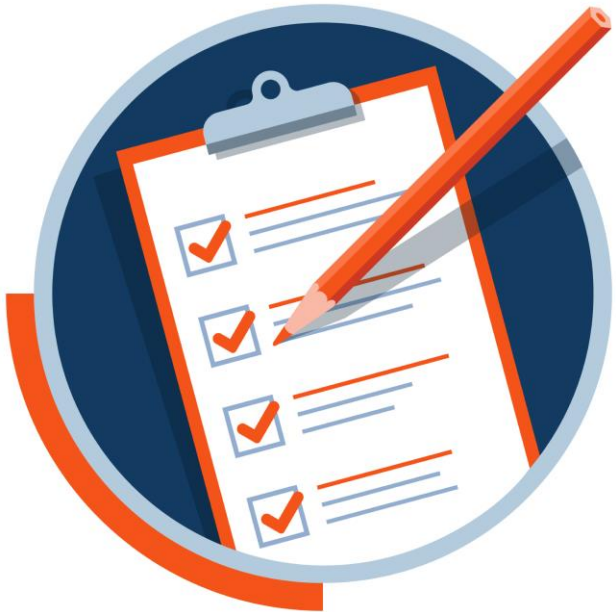
- **Passed January 5, 2025**
- **Effective Date**
  - Applies to benefits payable after December 2023
- **Implementation**
  - Social Security Administration began providing backpay in March, increased monthly benefits in April, announced completion of implementation
  - Retroactive payment limited to benefits payable 6 months prior to application
    - NARFE Letter to SSA Requested Extension
      - No Response.
      - Next Steps: Follow-Up, Discuss with Relevant Congressional Committee Staff





## Overview

- **Oppose** Cuts to Earned Federal Retirement and Health Benefits
- **Protect** the Integrity of Government Operations and the Merit-Based Civil Service
- **Support** Full COLAs for FERS Retirees
- **Support** Policies to Improve Choice, Lower Cost for FEHB/PSHB
- **Improve** OPM Customer Service from Retirement Services





## Oppose Cuts to Earned Retirement and Health Benefits

- **Budget Reconciliation Posed Major Threat**
  - Avoids filibuster, allowing partisan passage in the Senate, with 50 votes
- **Plan to Use Potentially Trillions in Spending Cuts to Offset Cost of Tax Cuts, Other Spending**
- **Cuts to Federal Benefits Among Offsets**



## Oppose Cuts to Earned Retirement and Health Benefits

- **House- and Senate-Passed Budget Resolution, H.Con.Res.14, required \$50 billion in cuts from spending under jurisdiction of House Oversight and Government Reform Committee (OGR)**
  - OGR has jurisdiction over federal retirement and health benefit programs; and not much additional mandatory spending programs
  - Senate committees retain greater flexibility
- **OGR passed “Committee Print” with about \$51 billion in cuts to federal employee/retiree benefits**



## Oppose Cuts to Earned Retirement and Health Benefits

- **“Committee Print” Did NOT Include:**



- Voucher Model for FEHB/PSHB
  - You Pay More Than 50% of Premiums After 10 Years
  - \$20k to \$50k cost over 10 years
  - Proposal was under serious consideration, but excluded due to political opposition



- Reducing rate of return on Thrift Savings Plan G fund
  - Below market rate of return for similar asset (F fund, e.g.)
  - Would recommend moving assets out of TSP



- Reductions to/Elimination of COLAs
  - Previously supported by Trump budget proposals (during 1<sup>st</sup> administration)
  - No indication this was under serious consideration by Congress



## Oppose Cuts to Earned Retirement and Health Benefits

- **“Committee Print” Included:**



- Increased contributions (increase of 3.6% of pay) toward retirement
  - Would not apply to those subject to mandatory early retirement
  - Phases in over two years (1.8% in 2026, 2027)



- Elimination of Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) annuity supplement
  - Applicable as of date of enactment
  - Would not apply to those forced to retire early (but does apply to those potentially subject to mandatory early retirement)



- High-3 to High-5
  - Applicable for retirements after 1/1/27
  - Would not apply to those subject to mandatory early retirement



## Oppose Cuts to Earned Retirement and Health Benefits

- **“Committee Print” Included:**



- Choose between at-will employment or additional 5% increase in retirement contributions (permanent 5% tax/pay cut)
  - Would undermine merit-based civil service

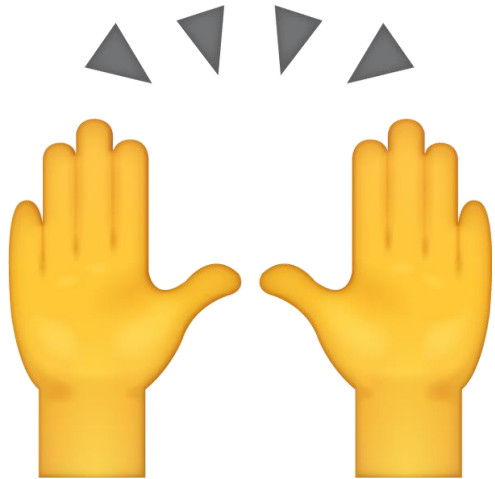


- Fee for Merit Systems Protection Board Appeals
  - Would undermine merit-based civil service
- Audit of FEHB to Ensure Covered Family Members are Eligible for Coverage
  - NARFE did NOT oppose



## Oppose Cuts to Earned Retirement and Health Benefits

- **Amendments Included in House Rules Committee Print**



- Removed provision to increase contributions toward retirement for current federal employees
- Applicable date for elimination of the FERS annuity supplement shifted to 1/1/28 (as opposed to date of enactment)
- Applicable date for High-3 to High-5 shifted to retirements on or after 1/1/28 (from 1/1/27)
- Individuals subject to mandatory early retirement maintain FERS annuity supplement (previously only those forced to retire early exempt)
- Individuals subject to mandatory early retirement exempted from choice of at-will employment or 5% pay cut



## Oppose Cuts to Earned Retirement and Health Benefits



- **Manager's Amendment**

- Removed provision to shift from High-3 to High-5 for future retirements from FERS and CSRS



- **House Passage**

- House Passed bill 215-214-1 on May 22



## Oppose Cuts to Earned Retirement and Health Benefits

- **Senate Draft**



- Removed elimination of FERS annuity supplement



- 5% across the board increase in retirement contributions for new hires, plus choice between additional 5% or at-will employment
  - **Choice between at-will or 5% penalty subject to Byrd Rule point of order!**
  - **Across-the-board increase for new hires removed!**



- Fee for MSPB appeals
  - **Subject to Byrd Rule point of order!**



- Broad authority to president to reorganize government
  - **Subject to Byrd Rule point of order!**



## Oppose Cuts to Earned Retirement and Health Benefits

- **Senate Draft**

- 10% Administrative Fee / Tax on Payroll Deductions (for membership association dues, e.g.) from Federal Employees
  - Not applicable to annuities
  - **Removed!**
- Charge Unions Fee for Time & Use of Agency Resources
  - **Removed.**
- Bonuses for federal employees identifying savings.
  - **Removed.**



## Protect the Integrity of Government Operations and Protecting the Merit System



**1. Oppose Efforts to Politicize the Merit-Based Civil Service**



**2. Oppose Across-the-Board Reductions in the Size of the Federal Workforce (and Policies Intended to Facilitate Such)**



**3. Support Market Rate Increases to Federal Pay Rates/Oppose Federal Compensation Cuts**

- Expected Military Raise (2026) – 4.3 percent
- FAIR Act (H.R. 493/S.126)
  - 3.8 percent across-the-board + 1.0 percent average increase in locality pay



## Oppose Efforts to Politicize the Merit-Based Civil Service




### • **Schedule Policy/Career (P/C), formerly Schedule F**

- Directs reclassification of employees identified as holding positions of a “confidential, policy-determining, policy-making, or policy-advocating” character
- New Schedule P/C classification in the excepted service would not have competitive service protections to ensure merit-based hiring and firing
- Interpreted broadly, could apply to 50,000 or more federal employees



## Oppose Efforts to Politicize the Merit-Based Civil Service

- **Schedule Policy/Career (P/C), formerly Schedule F**
  - Lawsuit Challenging Action
  - NARFE Comment on Proposed Rule (and incorporated comments from legal counsel / Protect Democracy)
-  **Support the Saving the Civil Service Act, H.R. 492/S.134**
  - Would prohibit return of Schedule F, protect merit based civil service



## Oppose Efforts to Politicize the Civil Service

- **“Restoring Accountability” to Senior Executive Service**
  - Asserts the president has Article II power to terminate senior executives, despite statutory law to the contrary
- **Schedule G**
  - New excepted service schedule for noncareer appointments (expanding beyond normal, Schedule C political appointments)





## Oppose Across-the-Board Reductions in the Size of the Federal Workforce

- **Return to Office Mandate**
- **Hiring Freeze**
  - 90 Days Initially, Extended to mid-October
- **Agency- and Program-Wide Use of Administrative Leave**
  - USAID, ED, DEIA



## Oppose Across-the-Board Reductions in the Size of the Federal Workforce

- **“Deferred Resignation” Offer**
  - Type “Resign,” Hit “Send”
  - 77,000 accepted
- **Firing 25,000+ Probationary Employees**
  - Many probationary because promoted, in new position
  - Courts initially reversed due to being directed by OPM, which does not have authority to do so
  - Employees may still be separated via RIFs



## Oppose Across-the-Board Reductions in the Size of the Federal Workforce

- **Agency RIF (Reduction-in-Force) and Reorganization Plans**
  - Two Phase Plans Submitted to Administration (April 14 deadline), But Not Publicly Released
  - Agencies Engaged in RIFs on Rolling Basis
    - Some, like VA, relied on DRP & Attrition
  - Expected Completion by September 30, 2025
  - Total Reduction in Force Estimates
    - OPM: 154,000 resignations or early retirements
    - Partnership for Public Service: 148,000 voluntary resignations, early retirements or firings
    - CNN: 51,000+ involuntary separations



## Protecting the Integrity of Government Operations

- **Eliminate federal jobs in disfavored federal agencies, overall**
  - Stop carrying out function?
  - Contract out jobs?
  - Replace humans with Artificial Intelligence?
- **Assumption of executive power over congressional spending directives**
  - Eliminating agencies
  - Canceling Spending / Impoundment
- **Data privacy concerns via DOGE activities**





## Protecting the Integrity of Government Operations – Requests to Congress

- **Highlight the Impact of Workforce Reductions on Constituents**
- **Use Oversight Authority to Demand Transparency**
- **Exercise Power of the Purse to Prohibit Funds to Carry Out Large-Scale RIFs without Prior Congressional Authorization**



## Support Full COLAs for FERS Retirees



- **Support of the Equal COLA Act, H.R. 491 / S.624, ensuring FERS COLAs match the change in consumer prices (and the CSRS COLA)**
- **If CPI increases above 2%, FERS retirees do not receive full COLA**
  - If between 2% and 3%, FERS COLA = 2%
  - If above 3%, FERS COLA = CPI minus 1%





## Support Improved Choice/Lower Costs for FEHB/PSHB



- **Maintain Choice for Part B**



- **Allow Part D Opt-Out**



- **Reimbursement for Part B Premiums**



## Improve OPM Customer Service from Retirement Services



- **Support Improvements to OPM Customer Service**

- Congressional oversight of OPM RS
- Support IT modernization and proper funding



- **NARFE Continues to Receive Complaints From Members**

- Inability to connect to OPM
- Delays processing transactions (e.g., changes to health benefits)
- Delays starting survivor annuities

# Advocacy Actions Summary

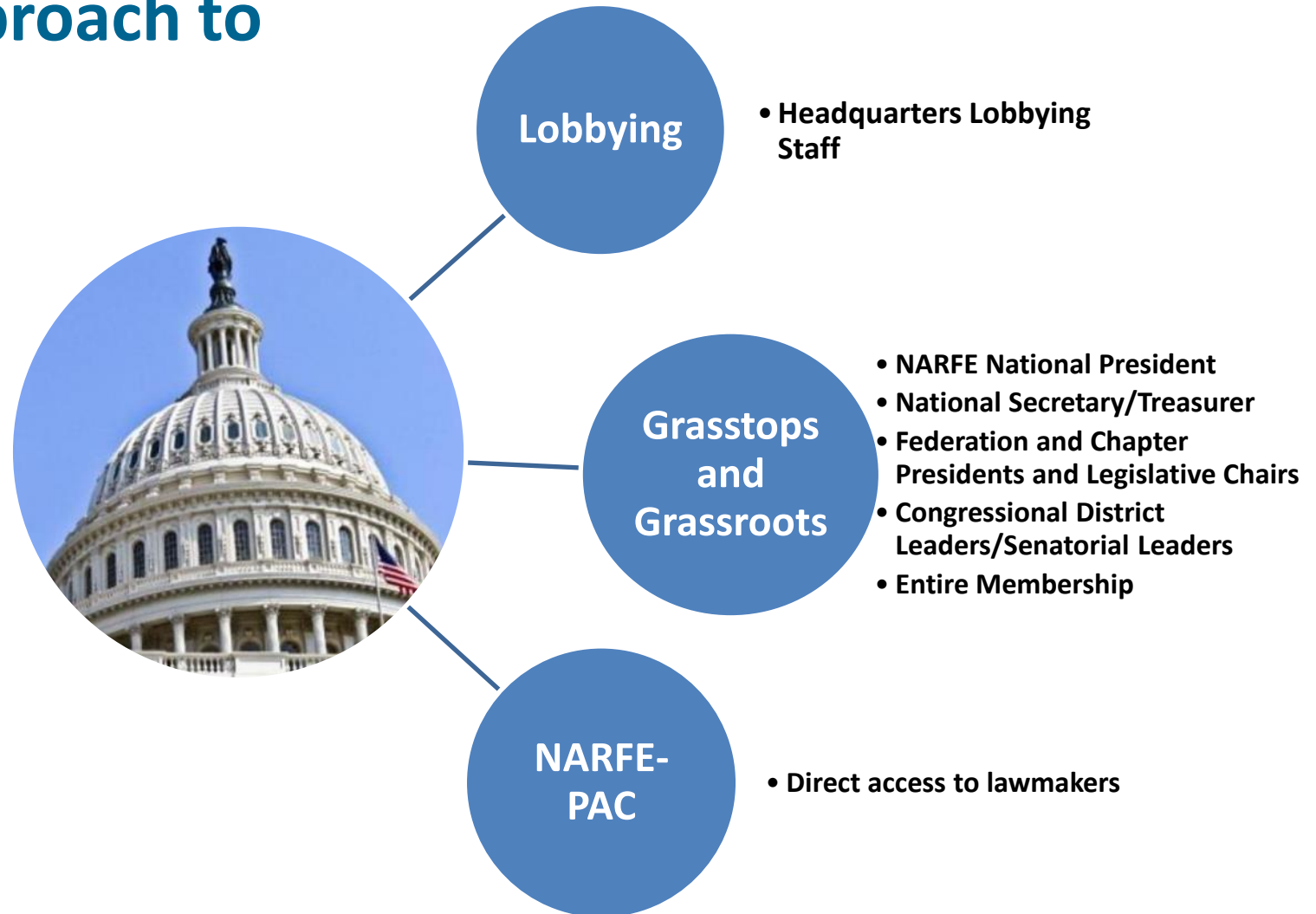
# Advocacy Actions Summary



## A Three-Legged Approach to Advocacy

+ Legal Action

+ Public Relations





## Lobbying / Political Activity

- **Official Letters on Key Issues**
- **Meetings / Contacts with Targeted Republican Lawmakers**
  - Mainly Focused on H.Con.Res.14 & H.R.1
  - Also Highlighted Opposition to Administrative Actions
- **Coordinating with Democratic Allies**
  - Roundtable Discussions, Coalition Meetings
    - NARFE Hosted Senator Kaine at NARFE HQ
  - Coordinate Challenges Based on Byrd Rule in Senate



## Grassroots Activity


- **Year-Round Grassroots Content Creation and Activity Promotion**
  - Grassroots Advocacy Month ongoing – weekly posts, e-mails, actions
- **Benchmarks to Promote Actions**
- **LEGcon25**
  - 228 registrants
  - 227 meetings

# LEGcon25 Survey & Final Numbers


The Good & The Bad

*Presented by Nicole Blackstone*





# LEGcon25 Overall Survey Results

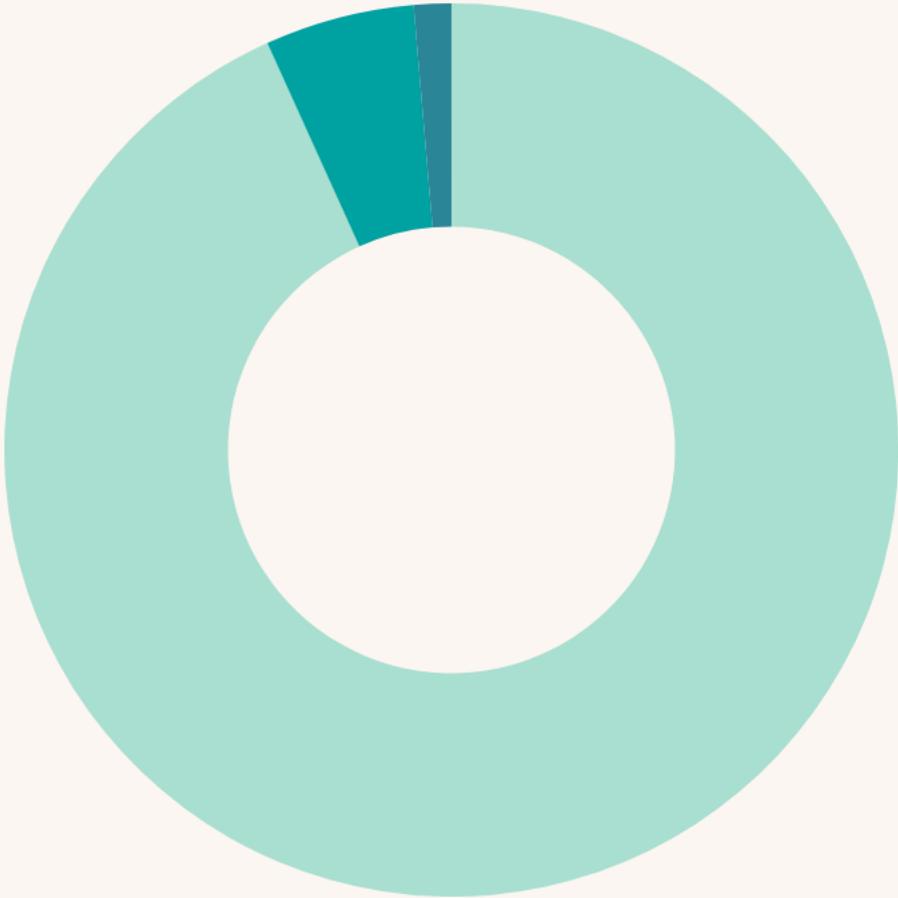


# Did LEGcon25 meet your objectives?

Yes: 69 (93.2%)

No: 4 (5.4%)

N/A: 1 (1.4%)



# How satisfied were you with the variety of sessions and presentations?

Very Satisfied: 46

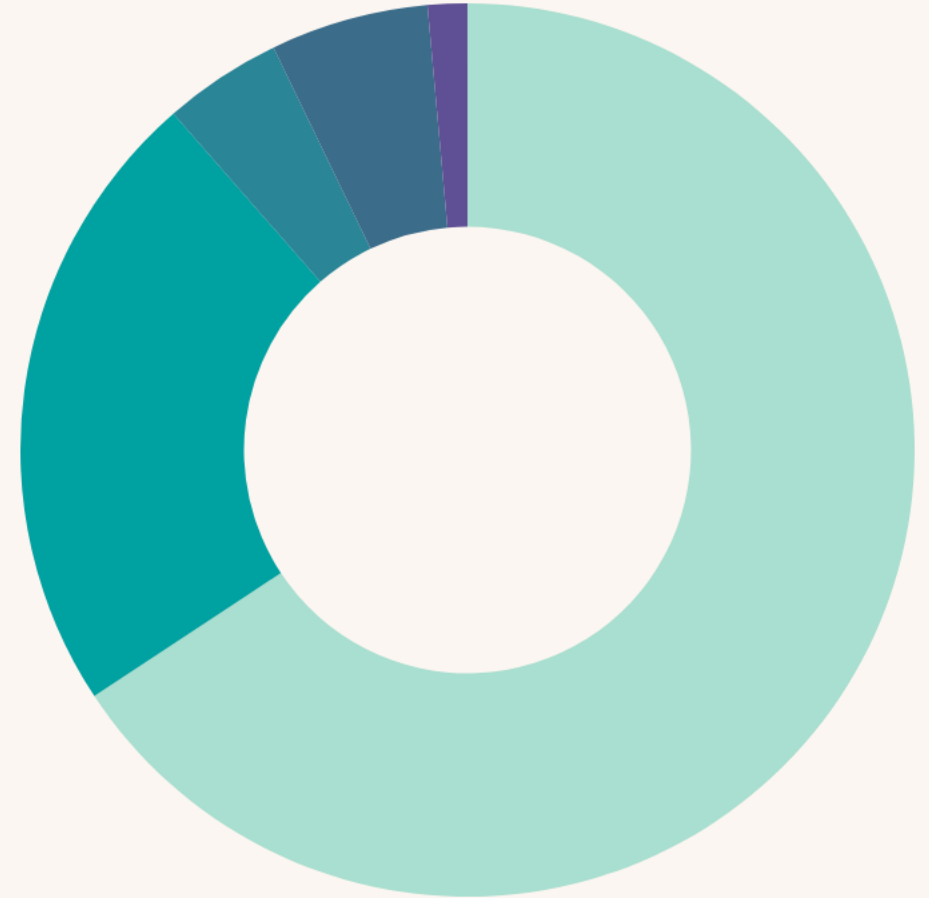
Somewhat satisfied: 16

Neither Satisfied nor dissatisfied: 3

Somewhat dissatisfied: 4

Very dissatisfied: 0

N/A: 1



# Overall, how satisfied were you with LEGcon25?

Very Satisfied: 48

Somewhat satisfied: 19

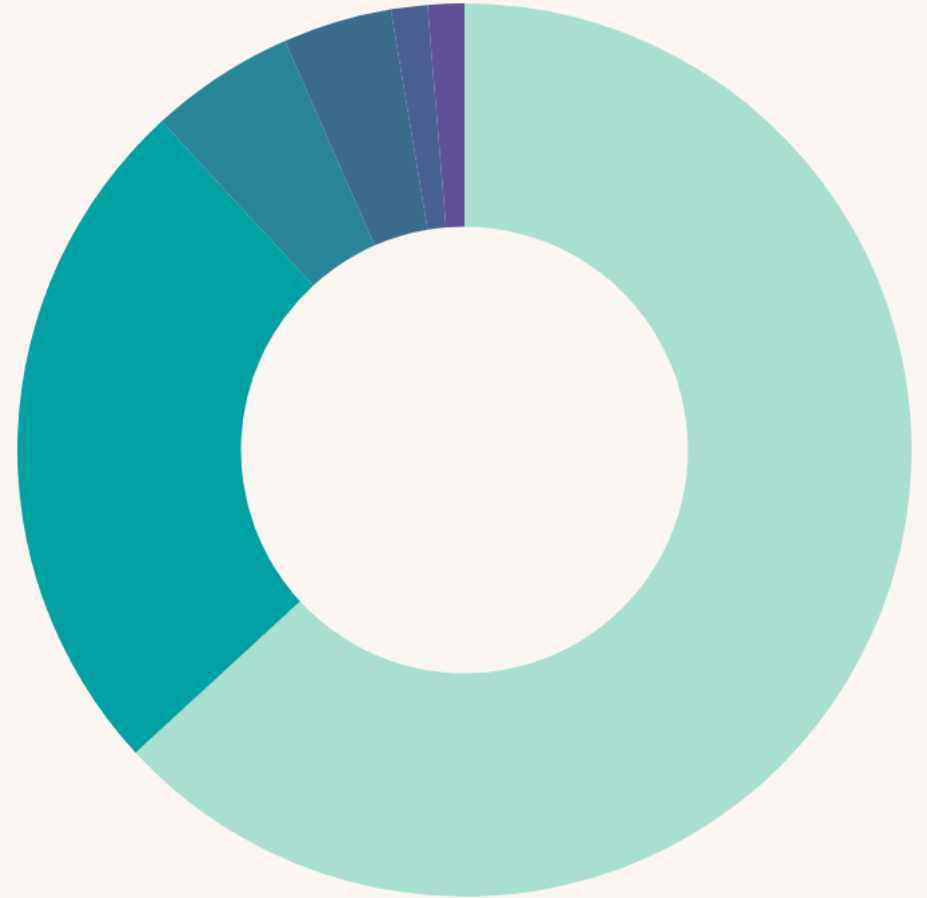
Neither Satisfied nor dissatisfied: 4

Somewhat dissatisfied: 3

Very dissatisfied: 1

N/A: 1

\*\* Note: two people picked two responses for this question





# Common Additional Comments

## 01.

Technical difficulties ranging from time zone confusion, Zoom issues, problems with the Advocacy Day platform, etc.

## 02.

Desire for additional prep, including setting up meetings with advocacy day group in advance, putting slides up before conference so people can print them, and maybe the need for a secondary “Know Before You Go” session to answer questions after people had a chance to log into the platforms.

## 03.

LOTS of thank you's! I would be remiss if I did not point out that a large majority of our attendees acknowledged the work that went into putting LEGcon25 together and were very appreciative of our staff, even when they had feedback!



# Lobbying Day Survey Results

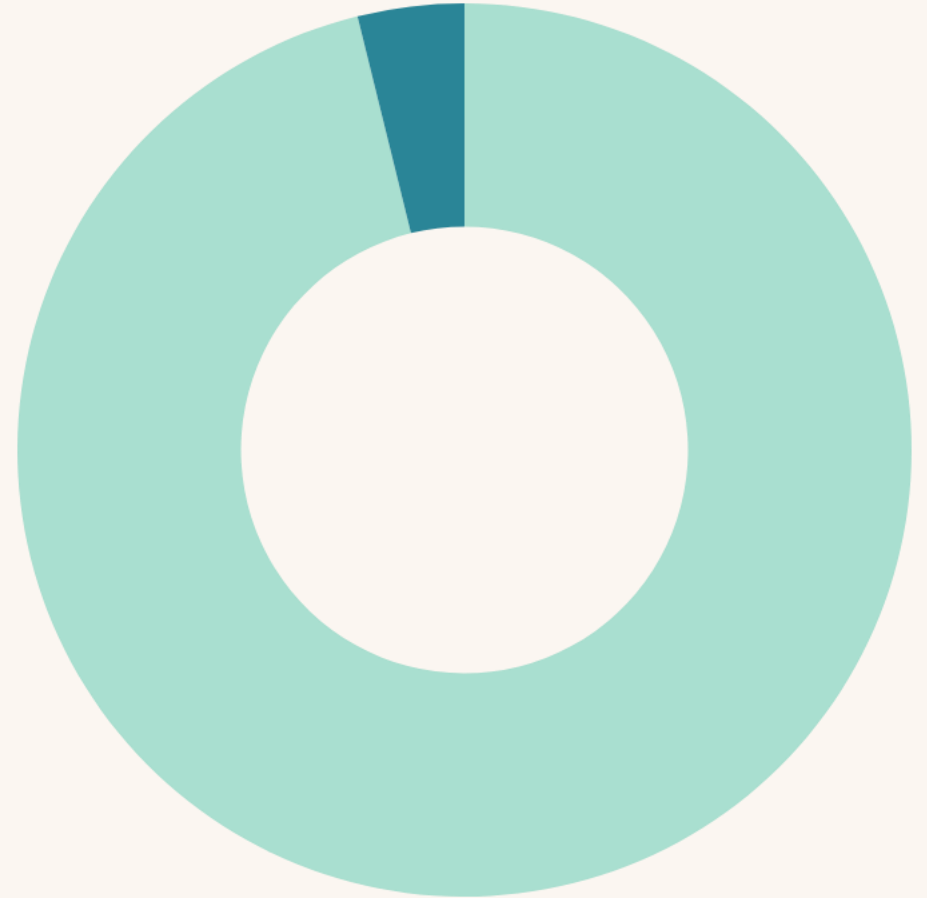


# Did you feel well prepared for your virtual congressional meetings?

Yes: 25

No: 1

\*One person did not answer this

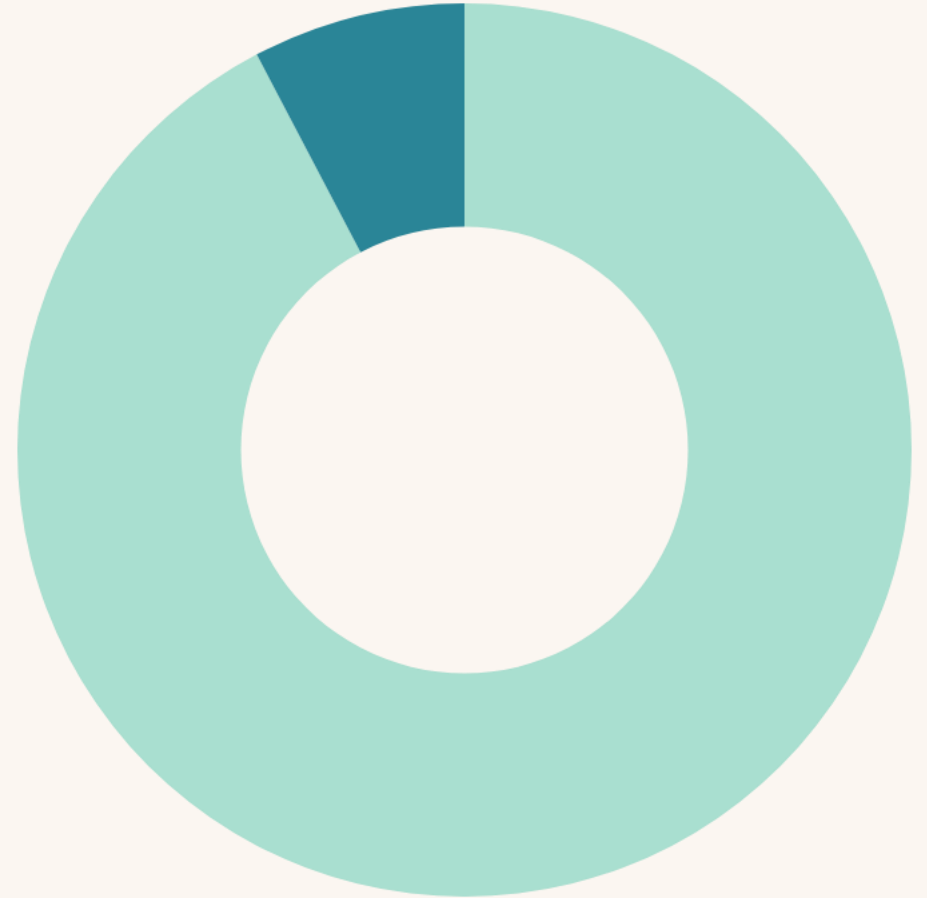


Did you feel you were able to effectively communicate NARFE's positions during the lobbying day?

Yes: 24

No: 2

\*One person did not answer this



# How would you rate your virtual lobby day experience regarding the ease of use of the platform (i.e. logging in, accessing materials, etc.)?

Excellent: 12

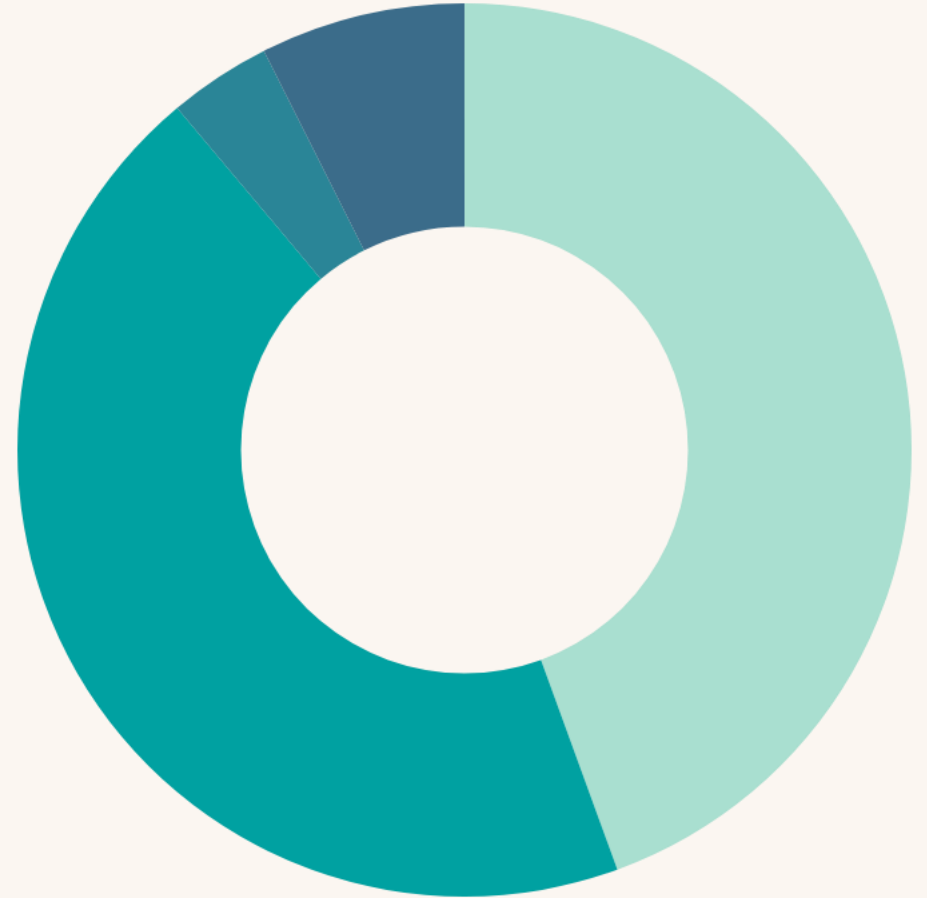
Above Average: 12

Average: 1

Below Average: 2

Poor: 0

N/A: 0



# How would you rate your virtual lobby day experience regarding the provided materials for you to reference (i.e. one pagers, Intro to NARFE sheet, etc.)?

Excellent: 15

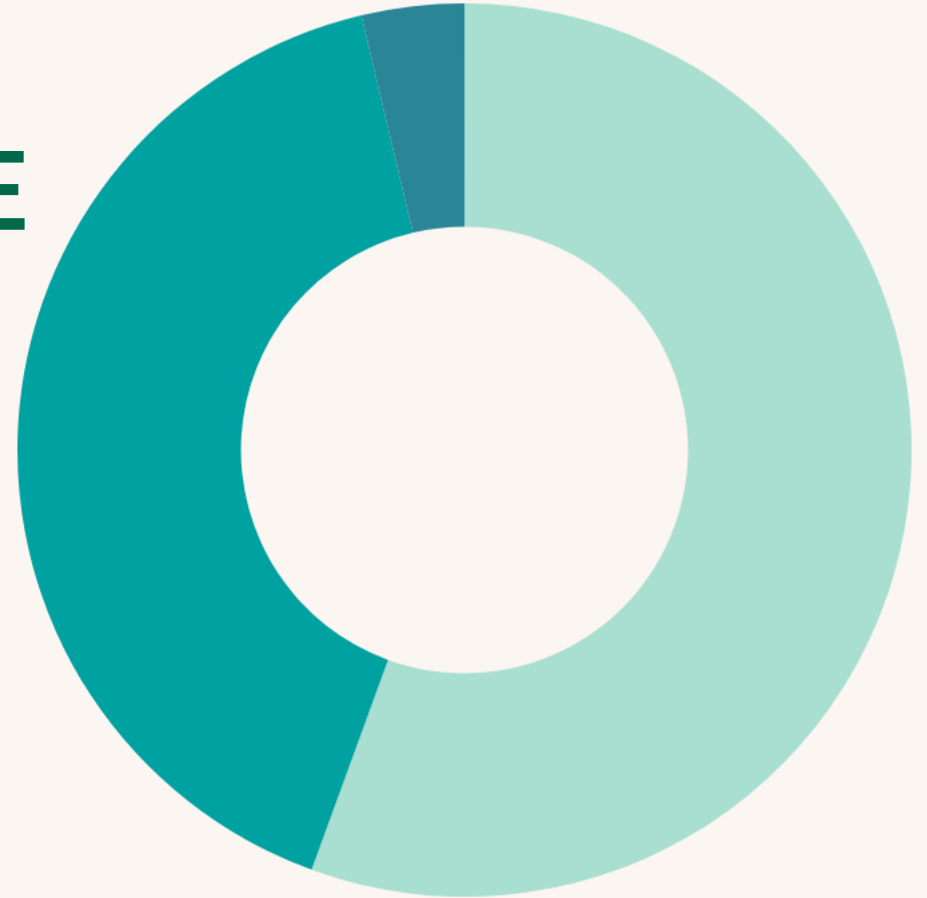
Above Average: 11

Average: 1

Below Average: 0

Poor: 0

N/A: 0



How would you rate your virtual lobby day experience regarding the scheduling of your meetings (i.e. the Members of Congress you met with, how many meetings you had, etc.)?

Excellent: 14

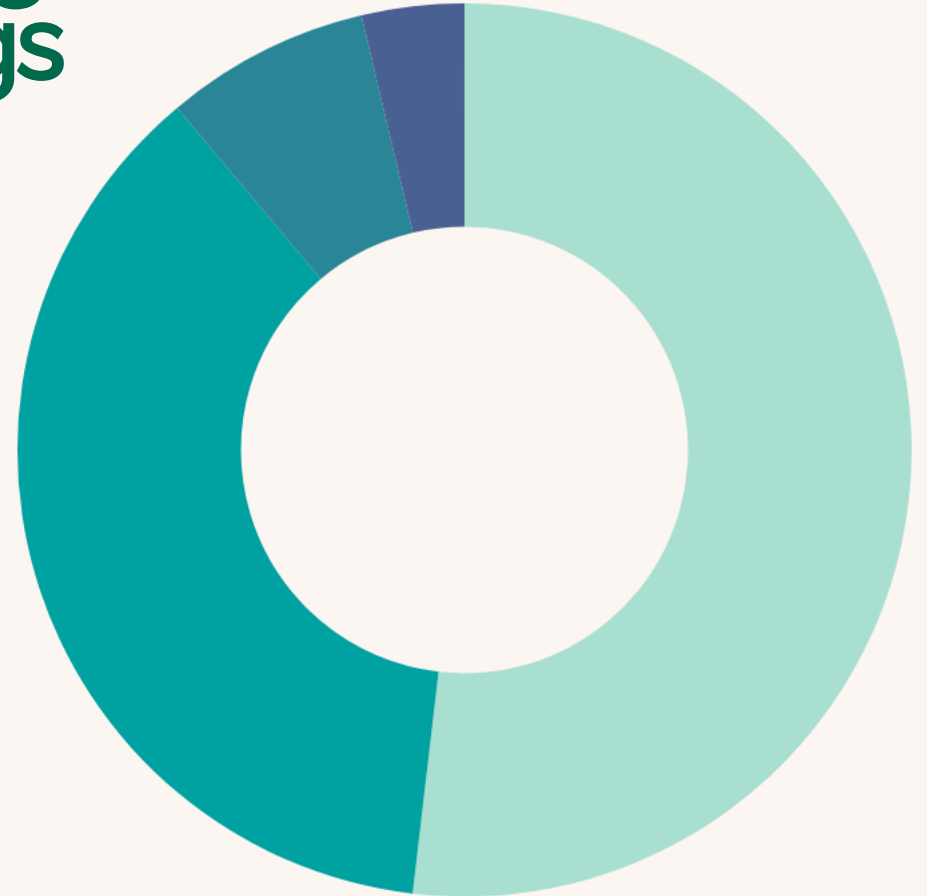
Above Average: 10

Average: 2

Below Average: 0

Poor: 1

N/A: 0





## NARFE-PAC Update

- **Total Contributions for 2025 (End of Q2): \$586,785.63**
  - Up from \$481,597 at end of Q2, 2023
  - Goal: \$1.5 million for 2025-26 Cycle
    - Likely on pace
- **Total Disbursements: \$374,000 (End of Q2)**
  - Up from \$258,500 at end of Q2, 2023
  - Goal: \$1.2 million for 2025-26 Cycle
    - On Pace



## Lawsuits Challenging Administration Actions

- Schedule P/C
  - Executive order violates Administrative Procedures Act
  - Interpretation violates statute
- Privacy Act Violations
  - Unauthorized disclosure of personal information
  - Without applicable exception or consent
  - Poses danger of abuse of power
  - Secured preliminary injunction against DOGE affiliate access to OPM, ED, Treasury; injunction stayed pending appeal



**Thank You!**

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**Questions?**