In this toolkit, you will…

Learn how to promote legislative involvement at the Chapter and Federation levels. NARFE leaders will learn about the numerous ways to interact with members of Congress, conduct grassroots activities at your meetings and engage NARFE members in the legislative process.
Building Relationships with Congressional Offices

To be influential, it is important to get to know members of Congress and their staff, and build a relationship with the office. This gives you the opportunity to help the office and not give the perception that you only come around when you are asking for something. The information below will help you build and maintain a relationship with your congressional office so that you become a trusted resource on federal employee issues.

The Introduction

Introduce yourself at a community event, town hall or fundraiser. Initially, there may be no need for a formal meeting. These community events allow you an opportunity to break the ice and share your background. Hand them a business card or something to identify you as a NARFE leader. If you can, have a NARFE email address (for example: narfe1234pres@______.com).

Community events are usually organized by the district office. Members’ district offices are there primarily for constituent services – that means they are there for YOU. These are the staff members that you likely will work with the most. Find out with whom in the local office you are most likely going to work and how to contact them. After the event, send an email to your contact introducing yourself again.

The Meeting

When appropriate, schedule a meeting in the district to talk about NARFE’s issues. These meetings can occur with the member of Congress or their staff. This is another opportunity to reach out to the staff and show that you are a resource.

See the Meeting section for more information.

After the Meeting

Stay in touch. Keep the office informed on a regular basis (just short of being a pest). Your goal should be for them to see you as a resource and be responsive to NARFE’s agenda. This can include dropping by the office when there is a relevant article in the narfe magazine or saying hello at a town hall meeting. Show that you are engaged and paying attention, and they will pay attention back.
Most of what we ask for is legislative in nature. It is the Washington, DC, staff that supports the member’s legislative agenda. In time, you will establish a relationship with the Washington staff. Find out who in Washington handles our legislative issues for the member and work to establish a relationship with them as well. They will be the eyes and ears of the member on our issues – make sure that they are seeing and hearing from NARFE.
In-State Congressional Visit Guide

One of the most effective ways to influence the policy-making process and build a relationship with your legislator is to visit their local office in person.

Asking for the Meeting

Timeline: 3 - 6 weeks before you intend to have the meeting

The first thing you should do is send a meeting request to the member of Congress’ scheduler. You may make this request by email or fax using the sample meeting request (so that it is in writing) and then follow up the initial request shortly thereafter with a phone call, since schedules may be tight. Many congressional offices now also make it possible to request a meeting on their website.

Tips:
- Suggest specific times and dates for the meeting.
- Let them know you’d like to discuss issues relating to active and retired federal employees.
- List potential or confirmed attendees for the meeting if you will be bringing others along.
- If the lawmaker is unavailable to meet with you, ask for a meeting with the staffer responsible for federal workforce issues, or the district director.
- Be respectful, but be persistent! Make sure to follow up with the office if they don’t get back to you. If they tell you they have no availability, call back in a couple of days and ask if there have been any cancellations, or set something up for the next congressional recess.

Preparing for Your Meeting

Timeline: 1 - 2 weeks before the meeting

Step #1: Where Do They Stand?

The first thing you’ll want to do when preparing for a meeting with your legislator or his or her staff is to find out where they stand on NARFE’s legislative priorities. You can find this information by exploring their website or NARFE’s Legislative Action Center. NARFE legislative staff also can assist you. See the “Know Before You Go” Checklist.
Step #2: Print Your Talking Points and Handouts

Once you’re familiar with your legislator’s views and where current legislative proposals stand, the next item on your agenda should be to begin to assemble the materials you will need for your visit.

Talking points are what you will use to educate yourself to effectively communicate with your legislator.

Fact Sheets and Issue Briefs are the written information that you will provide to the member or their staff as a leave-behind. Please refer to the Issue Briefs and Fact Sheets Toolkit to access documents that can be used as leave-behinds.

If Attending the Meeting With Others

Step #3: Recruiting Attendees

Your legislator’s time is valuable, so you’ll want to maximize your efforts by inviting others to attend your meeting with you. You should aim to have no more than six people at the meeting for the most effective outcome. These can be NARFE members, active or retired non-NARFE members, community leaders or members of a federal employees’ union. If your representative’s district includes several NARFE chapters, you may want to work with all of the chapters to send a representative.

It’s always good to bring a variety of voices and perspectives to these meetings if you can, but if you don’t have an entourage, that’s OK as well. One-on-one meetings are still extremely helpful!

Step #4: Conduct an Attendees’ Training Meeting

One of the most important pre-meeting activities you will conduct is assembling your team to plan out how the meeting is going to proceed.

- Prioritize - With input from your team members, you should decide in what order you are going to present and who will play the lead role in the discussion. This is very important, as you never know how long a meeting is going to last; some meetings last 30 minutes or more, while others last for only five.
- Delegate - You should plan on assigning roles for each member of your group. One person should be the lead facilitator, while others speak to specific pieces of legislation or issues. This is a good place to highlight a personal story. You should also make sure that one person takes good notes during the meeting for future reference.
- **Review** - You should review the materials you’ll be giving your legislator and discuss the talking points NARFE provides. This will go a long way toward making sure that your group members are knowledgeable and consistent during the actual meeting.

**Step #5: Confirm Your Meeting**

*Timeline: 2 days before meeting*

Make sure you confirm your meeting with your legislator’s scheduler a couple of days before the meeting is to occur.

**Step #6: Attend the Meeting**

Be sure to show up on time at the office (but no more than 10 minutes early). Bring any leave-behind materials with you. Reference the [Sample Agenda](#) to guide your meeting’s content. If possible, ask your member if they would be willing to take a photo with you to share with your NARFE chapter and NARFE HQ.

**Following Your Meeting**

*Timeline: No later than a week following meeting*

**Step #1: Send a Thank You**

Following your meeting, send the member of Congress and staff a thank you note for the meeting. If you promised follow-up information, this is a prime opportunity to send it. If the member agreed to take action on legislation, politely remind them or thank them again for taking action. See sample thank you [letter here](#).

**Step #2: Tell Headquarters About Your Meeting**

Email [advocacyinaction@narfe.org](mailto:advocacyinaction@narfe.org) to tell Headquarters about your meeting. This information is important in our continued communications with members of Congress.
Washington, DC Congressional Visit Guide

*It is highly effective for NARFE members and chapters to visit their members of Congress in their legislative offices on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC.*

**Asking for the Meeting**

*Timeline: 4 - 6 weeks before you intend to have the meeting*

The first thing you should do is send a meeting request to the member of Congress’ scheduler. You may make this request by email or fax using the sample meeting request (so that it is in writing) and then follow up the initial request shortly thereafter with a phone call. Do not send mail through the postal service to your member of Congress – due to security concerns, mail experiences considerable delays in reaching the Capitol. Many congressional offices now also make it possible to request a meeting on their website.

**Tips:**
- Suggest specific times and dates for the meeting. Please make sure to indicate the time constraints around your visit to Washington.
- Let them know you'd like to discuss issues relating to active and retired federal employees.
- List potential or confirmed attendees for the meeting if you will be bringing others along.
- If the lawmaker is unavailable to meet with you, ask for a meeting with the staffer responsible for budget or federal workforce issues.
- Be respectful, but be persistent! Make sure to follow up with the office if they don’t get back to you. If they tell you they have no availability, call back in a couple of days and ask if there have been any cancellations.

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**Step #5: Confirm Your Meeting**

*Timeline: 2 days before meeting*

Make sure you confirm your meeting with your legislator’s scheduler a couple of days before the meeting is to occur.

**Step #6: Attend the Meeting**

Be sure to show up on time, but no more than 10 minutes early. Allow plenty of travel time to arrive at your member’s office in Washington. Particularly if you aren’t familiar with the location, you’ll want some flexibility in case you hit traffic or get lost. Capitol Hill offices can be very busy places, so it may be difficult for your member to postpone or delay a meeting with you.

Bring any leave-behind material with you. Reference the [Sample Agenda](#) to guide your meeting’s content. If possible, ask your member if they would be willing to take a photo with you to share with your NARFE chapter and NARFE HQ.

**Following Your Meeting**

*Timeline: No later than a week following meeting*

**Step #1: Send a Thank You**

Following your meeting, send the member of Congress and staff a thank you note for the meeting. If you promised follow-up information, this is a prime opportunity to send it. If the member agreed to take action on legislation, politely remind them or thank them again for taking action. See [sample thank you letter](#).

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Tips for Conducting Your Congressional Visit – In-State or in D.C.

- **Acknowledge Support** - Take a moment to acknowledge the Member’s current support for legislation he or she is already cosponsoring or any past support he or she has given. A thank you goes a long way.

- **Establish a Connection** - Mention a current event you have a shared interest in, or praise a recent vote the legislator cast you can agree on. "I was glad to see the way you cast your vote on the earned health and retirement benefits issue," is the sort of statement that will let a legislator know you are engaged in federal politics and care deeply about a variety of topics.

- **Grassroots Support** - You should let those you are meeting with know what you and your fellow NARFE members are doing to be active in your area. Be specific and provide them with examples, such as letters to the editor that were printed, etc.

- **Paint the Big Picture and the Small Picture** - For example, one person could tell his or her story about how the proposed cuts could affect her/him personally (the small picture); then someone else could provide current statistics and impact in the state and country.

- **Tell Your Story** - The most effective method of communicating the importance of legislation is to tell your personal story or the story of someone close to you. We have seen time and time again that personal stories change minds, and this is your chance to personalize the issue.

- **Make Specific, Clear Requests and Ask for an Answer** - Often, the main reason groups have unsatisfactory meetings is that their requests were not clear and specific enough. Your elected officials need to know what you want them to do (i.e. - what bill you want them to cosponsor, how you want them to vote). However, in addition to the specific requests you bring, don't be afraid to ask the legislator what else they think they could do on your issue (particularly if he/she supports NARFE’s position).

- **Don't be Afraid to Say, "I don't know"** - During your visit, you may encounter a question that you cannot answer. Fear not! It's okay to admit you don't know the answer. You can simply research the issue, or ask someone at NARFE to do so, and then get back to the legislator’s office with the information requested. Whatever you do, never pretend you know something if you do not. Legislators will appreciate honesty, your willingness to find an answer to their questions and your commitment to the issue at hand.

- **Be Assertive** - During your meeting, it will be important to be assertive, but not aggressive. Your main goal is to convince the legislator to follow through on your request.

- **Speak Plainly** - You are not a paid lobbyist, but a constituent concerned about a policy. By speaking plainly and avoiding jargon and complex concepts, you will keep the meeting on track.
Meetings with Congressional Offices –
Know Before You Go Checklist

After scheduling a meeting with your legislator’s office, use this checklist to prepare for the meeting and learn more about your legislator’s position on NARFE issues. Most of this information can be found via our Legislative Action Center at www.cqrcengage.com/narfe/home, the state-specific “At a Glance” document or at www.congress.gov. If you need assistance finding the information in this checklist, please contact the NARFE Legislative staff at leg@narfe.org or 703-838-7760.

District/State Information (refer to the state-specific At a Glance document)

☐ How many federal employees and annuitants are in the district? In the state?

☐ Is the federal government one of the biggest employers in your district/state? What are the biggest federal agencies in your district/state and can you talk about the work they do?

Votes and Cosponsorships

☐ What is your Representative’s or Senators’ overall voting record with NARFE? Review their recent votes on NARFE issues to get a sense of their perception of federal employees and retirees.

☐ How did your Representative vote on H.R. 273 (113th Congress), which continued the pay freeze for a third year (NARFE opposed this legislation)?

☐ Is your Senators or Representative a cosponsor of S. 1651 or H.R. 973, a bill to repeal GPO and WEP (NARFE supports this legislation)? If they are not, respectfully ask for their cosponsorship. Were your Senators or Representative cosponsors of S. 896 or H.R. 1795, the Social Security Fairness Act of 2013 (introduced in the 113th Congress), to repeal GPO and WEP? If they were, respectfully ask your Senators or Representative for their cosponsorship of S. 1651 or H.R. 973.

☐ How did your Representative vote on H Con Res 27, the Fiscal 2016 House Budget Resolution (NARFE opposed this legislation)? How did your Senators vote on S. Con Res 11, the Fiscal 2016 Senate Budget Resolution (NARFE opposed this legislation)?
Chained CPI

☐ Have your Senators or Representative made any statements regarding the Chained CPI?

☐ How much will you lose over time if the Chained CPI is enacted? (use NARFE’s Chained CPI Calculator at www.narfe.org/legislation/calculator.cfm)

Member of Congress Background

☐ Do your Senators or Representative sit on a committee with jurisdiction over NARFE issues? House committees include: Budget, Oversight and Government Reform, and Ways and Means. Senate committees include: Budget, Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, and Finance.

☐ Have your Senators or Representative served in public service before being elected to Congress? Review their biography before going.
Template Meeting Request for In-State Visit

[State] FEDERATION
NATIONAL ACTIVE and RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

[Date]

The Honorable [Insert your representative or senator's first and last names]
Attn: Scheduler
[Insert the district office address]
[Insert the office city, state and ZIP Code]

Dear [Representative [OR] Senator] [Insert your representative or senator's last name],

I am writing to request a meeting with you at your district office in [Insert the name of the city where you'd like to meet]. I would like to discuss legislation affecting active and retired federal workers.

As a constituent and a member of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE), I am concerned about legislative and budgetary proposals that unfairly target current and retired federal workers. Among the top issues affecting retirees like me are cuts to our earned benefits and annuities. Budget cuts to either of these will have a tremendous impact on me, my family and my community.

I will follow up in the next few days with a phone call to schedule this meeting. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at [Insert your phone number and email address].

Sincerely,

[Insert your first and last name]
[Insert your address]
[Insert your city, state and ZIP code]
Template Meeting Request for D.C. Visit

[State] FEDERATION
NATIONAL ACTIVE and RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

[Date]

The Honorable [Insert your representative or senator’s first and last names]
Attn: Scheduler
[Insert the Washington, DC, office address]
Washington, DC [Insert office ZIP code]

Dear [Representative [OR] Senator] [Insert your representative or senator’s last name],

I am writing to request a meeting with you at your Washington, DC, office on or around [Insert dates you will likely be available to meet while in town]. I would like to discuss legislation affecting active and retired federal workers.

As a constituent and a member of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE), I am concerned about legislative and budgetary proposals that unfairly target current and retired federal workers. Among the top issues affecting retirees like me are cuts to our earned benefits and annuities. Budget cuts to either of these will have a tremendous impact on me, my family and my community.

I will follow up in the next few days with a phone call to schedule this meeting. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at [Insert your phone number and email address].

Sincerely,

[Insert your first and last name]
[Insert your address]
[Insert your city, state and ZIP code]
Sample Agenda – Congressional Meetings

I. Introduce NARFE Members
   a. Name
   b. Title
   c. Where in state you are from
   d. What you did for the federal government (short)

II. General Information
   a. What is NARFE and specifically your state’s federation of chapters
      i. Number of federal employees, postal employees and annuitants
         (available in the State-Specific Toolkit)
         1. Number of annuitants
         2. Number of employees
            a. Where do the employees work
         3. Number of postal employees
   b. Relationship with Legislator’s Office
      i. Your legislator’s voting record is available in the Legislative Action Center
      ii. Check your legislator’s position on key NARFE legislation by using the “Know Before You Go Checklist”
   c. What Federal Community Has Given Toward Deficit Reduction - $120 Billion
      i. Three-year pay freeze ($98 billion)
         1. According to BLS, the pay gap between the private sector and
            federal workers has increased 8.8 percent over the past fours
            years while the cost of goods has gone up 8.7 percent
      ii. New employees are now paying 3.6 percent more toward their
          retirement
         1. This is the second increase in two years for new employees
            (total savings - $21 billion)
      iii. Federal employees were furloughed up to 10 days in 2013 as a result
           of sequestration ($1 billion in lost wages in 2013 alone)
         1. Then employees faced a 16-day government shutdown where
            they received no pay and those who were not able to come to
            work had no guarantee of back pay

III. Chained CPI
   a. Originally suggested as part of the Simpson-Bowles Fiscal Commission,
      followed by the President’s FY14 budget, and the House Republican Study
      Committee FY14 and FY15 budgets
   b. Would switch from the current CPI-W to the Chained CPI to determine
      annual cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs)
i. Could impact federal annuitants, military civilian retirees, Social Security recipients, the disabled and veterans (i.e., everyone)

ii. Argued to be a more accurate measurement of inflation because it uses the substitution effect
   1. Does not take into account the lower standard of living resulting from the substitution effect

iii. There is no substitute for health care costs
   1. Health care inflation continues to rise at a higher amount than regular inflation
      a. In 2014, health care inflation was 3.7% while regular inflation was 1.7 percent
         i. FEHBP premiums rose 3.2 percent in 2015 while the COLA was 1.7 percent
      b. For those over age 62, health care is 12 percent of their spending – compared to 5 percent for those under 62
   iv. Seniors already on a fixed income have already substituted all that they can

   c. Use the Chained CPI calculator on NARFE’s website to determine your personal impact. Share that information during your meeting.

IV. Conclusion/Thank You
   a. Review any action items from the meeting
   b. Reminder that you are available as a resource
Sample Questions You Can Expect to Receive from Members of Congress and/or their Staff

What is NARFE?

NARFE is the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association. We represent over 5 million federal employees, retirees and their survivors, and defend the earned pay, health and retirement benefits of these middle-class Americans.

What did you do when you worked for the government?

The 2012 CBO Study showed that federal employees are overcompensated when compared to private-sector employees. Maybe a pay freeze or reduction in benefits is a good thing because it will even things out.

The CBO study showed that the most highly educated federal employees are paid 23 percent less than their private-sector counterparts. And when you look at complete compensation, they are earning 18 percent less. Across-the-board solutions will only harm recruitment and retention of the best and brightest employees – especially in highly educated and most sought-after fields. And it is not accurate to compare lower paid employees with their private-sector counterparts. The administrative assistant at the CIA has to go through a background check. The CBO study does not take into account level of job responsibility, specialized training and the length of tenure with an employer – all of which are taken into account by employers when setting pay.

Further, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), which looks at similar jobs and not individuals, the pay gap between private-sector workers and federal workers has increased 8.8 percent over the past four years – mainly because of the three-year pay freeze. Meanwhile, the cost of goods has gone up 8.7 percent in the United States. The pay gap, according to the BLS, is now over 35 percent.

What is the Chained CPI?

The Chained CPI is a different way of calculating the annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) provided to Social Security recipients, federal retirees, military retirees, veterans’ beneficiaries and recipients of disability benefits. COLAs allow for seniors and retirees to maintain their buying power.
The CPI, or consumer price index, is calculated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics every month. Currently, COLAs are determined based on the CPI-W, or Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers.

The “chained” part of Chained CPI assumes that people will change their buying habits when the cost of goods rise and, therefore, inflation isn’t as high as measured by the BLS. For example, if the price of beef rises substantially, people might buy more chicken.

**Why the suggested switch?**

Supporters of the Chained CPI argue that it is a way for the government to save money, prolong the solvency of Social Security and reduce the deficit because it is a more accurate measure of the cost of living. They say it assumes that shoppers will buy less expensive substitutes for items.

However, most seniors and people on fixed incomes have already “substituted” all that they can. Additionally, Americans over age 62 pay, on average, 12 percent of their income on health care – verses 5 percent for those under age 62. If a medication rises in price, a senior on a fixed income cannot substitute for another medication – they will have to go without.

**Why does NARFE oppose the switch to the Chained CPI?**

NARFE opposes the Chained CPI because the *current* method doesn’t even account for how seniors spend their money, and the Chained CPI only exacerbates that problem. Since the CPI-W measures the spending habits of workers under age 62, the things seniors spend most of their money on aren’t accurately accounted for, such as medications and doctor bills. The Chained CPI would hurt seniors even more.

It is estimated that the switch to the Chained CPI will reduce COLAs by 0.3 percent every year, which at first seems like a small number. But it has a very real snowball effect. If my COLA is reduced this year, then next year and the year after, not only is the COLA itself lower because of the Chained CPI, but the compounding effect makes for an even smaller COLA. For example, a person living on a $15,000 annuity – or the average Social Security benefit – would lose $700 over the course of five years. But over 10 years, their annuity would be reduced by $3,000. Undoubtedly, this would mean they would have to make cuts to their spending.

**Who would be impacted by the move to the Chained CPI?**

Anybody who is receiving or will receive a Social Security check or an annuity from the government as a result of being a federal worker or having served in the military would be
affected. Disabled veterans’ and Social Security Disability benefits are also tied to the CPI. These individuals tend to receive their benefits for a longer period of time, meaning that the compounding hits them the hardest.

There are also tax implications. The CPI is used to adjust tax brackets every year, and a switch to the Chained CPI would mean people would move between tax brackets faster. This would hit lower- and middle-income workers the hardest – making it harder to save money for retirement. According to the Joint Committee on Taxation, people with incomes between $20,000 and $30,000 a year would see their tax liability go up by 3.5 percent. Those with incomes above $1 million would only see an increase of 0.1 percent.

The President suggested the Chained CPI, so you should be reaching out to the White House or members of the President’s party?

The Chained CPI has been around as an idea for years, but it really first gained traction as part of the recommendations by the Simpson-Bowles Commission. The President included it in his budget for FY14 but the change has to go thru the legislative process, which is why we are speaking with you now.
# Additional Legislative Priorities

## Bills NARFE Supports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Bill Number/ Name/Sponsor</th>
<th>What Bill Would Do</th>
<th>Latest Action(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paid Parental Leave</td>
<td><strong>H.R. 532</strong>: Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2015</td>
<td>Provides six weeks of paid leave to federal employees for the birth, adoption or foster placement of a child.</td>
<td>Referred to the House Committees on Oversight and Government Reform and Administration</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney, D-NY</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federal Compensation</td>
<td><strong>H.R. 304/S. 164</strong>: The Federal Adjustment of Income Rates (FAIR) Act</td>
<td>Provides federal employees with a 3.8 percent pay raise in 2016.</td>
<td>Referred to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Compensation</td>
<td><strong>H.R. 485</strong>: Wage Grade Employee Parity Act</td>
<td>Gives the president authority to provide a pay raise for Wage Grade, or hourly, employees. Currently, those raises must be authorized by Congress, while the president can provide a pay raise for federal employees on the General Schedule.</td>
<td>Referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform</td>
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<td>Rep. Matt Cartwright, D-PA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federal Compensation</td>
<td><strong>H.R. 785</strong>: The Federal Employee Pension Fairness Act</td>
<td>Repeals laws passed in 2012 and 2013 that increased the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) contributions for newly hired federal employees.</td>
<td>Referred to three House committees</td>
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<td>Rep. Donna Edwards, D-MD</td>
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<td>Campaign Finance</td>
<td><strong>H.R. 20:</strong> The Government By the People Act</td>
<td>Reforms campaign finance laws to put smaller donors to political campaigns on par with wealthier donors. Provides a tax credit for campaign contributions and government matching contributions.</td>
<td>Referred to three House committees</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Rep. John Sarbanes, D-MD</td>
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</table>
| **Sick Leave for Wounded Veterans** | **H.R. 313/S. 242:** Wounded Warriors Federal Leave Act | Entitles any federal employee who is a veteran with a service-connected disability rated at 30 percent or more up to 104 hours of leave during their first year of employment, without loss or reduction in pay, for purposes of undergoing medical treatment for the disability for which sick leave could regularly be used. Requires the forfeiture of any of the leave that is not used during the one year period. | Approved by the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform on 1/27/15  
Approved by the Senate on 7/28/15 |
<p>| <strong>Postal Reform</strong> | <strong>H.Res. 12:</strong> Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States Postal Service should take all appropriate measures to ensure the continuation of its six-day delivery services | Expresses the sense of the House that the U.S. Postal Service should maintain six-day mail delivery. As a resolution, it will not be sent to the president and, therefore, cannot become law. | Referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform |
| | Rep. Sam Graves, R-MO | | |
| <strong>Postal Reform</strong> | <strong>H.Res. 54:</strong> Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States Postal Service should take all appropriate measures to restore service standards in effect as of July 1, 2012. | Expresses the sense of the House that the U.S. Postal Service should return to the service standards that were in effect as of July 1, 2012. This would reverse the lower service standards that were implemented January 5, 2015 to virtually eliminate overnight delivery of first class mail. As a resolution, it will not be sent to the president and, therefore, cannot become law. | Referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Postal Reform</strong></th>
<th>H.R. 784: To reinstate USPS overnight delivery standards for market-dominant products, and for other purposes.</th>
<th>Repeals the service standards the U.S. Postal Service implemented on January 5, 2015, which virtually eliminated overnight delivery of first class mail.</th>
<th>Referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rep. Rosa L. DeLauro, D-CT</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Postal Reform</strong></td>
<td>S. 1742: Rural Postal Act of 2015</td>
<td>Returns to service standards of July 2012, preserves six-day delivery, puts two-year moratorium on plant mitigation procedures for closures and reductions in hours of rural post offices.</td>
<td>Referred to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sen. Heidi Heitkamp, D-ND</td>
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<td><strong>GPO/WEP</strong></td>
<td>H.R. 973/S. 1651: To amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision.</td>
<td>Repeals both the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP).</td>
<td>Referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means Referred to Senate Committee on Finance</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DC Statehood</strong></td>
<td>H.R. 317: New Columbia Admission Act</td>
<td>Sets forth procedures that would allow the District of Columbia to become a state, known as New Columbia.</td>
<td>Referred to the House Committees on Oversight and Government Reform and Administration</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton, D-DC</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Federal Hiring</strong></td>
<td>H.R. 2827/S. 1580: Competitive Service Act</td>
<td>Allows federal agencies to review and select job candidates from other federal agencies’ “best qualified list” of applicants.</td>
<td>Referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform</td>
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<tr>
<td>OPM Security Breach</td>
<td><strong>H.R. 3029/S. 1746: RECOVER Act</strong>&lt;br&gt;Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton, D-DC/ Sen. Ben Cardin, D-MD</td>
<td>Expands lifetime coverage of credit monitoring and identity theft protection of no less than $5 million to all individuals affected by the OPM security breaches.</td>
<td>Referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform&lt;br&gt;Referred to Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs</td>
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## Bills NARFE is Monitoring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Bill Number/ Name/Sponsor</th>
<th>What Bill Would Do</th>
<th>Latest Action(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health Care Benefits</td>
<td><strong>H.R. 138</strong>: Access to Insurance for All Americans Act</td>
<td>Repeals the Affordable Care Act and establishes a national health program administered by the Office of Personnel Management to offer Federal Employee Health Benefits Program plans to individuals who are not federal employees or retirees. It creates separate risk pools for federal and nonfederal participants.</td>
<td>Referred to nine House committees</td>
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<td>Rep. Darrell Issa, R-CA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Care Benefits</td>
<td><strong>H.R 2175</strong>: FEHBP Prescription Drug Oversight and Cost Savings Act</td>
<td>Provides the Office of Personnel Management greater oversight authority over the prescription drug contracting and pricing methods of the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program.</td>
<td>Referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Hiring</td>
<td><strong>H.R. 1994</strong>: VA Accountability Act of 2015</td>
<td>Makes it easier for the Department of Veterans Affairs to demote or fire employees based on poor performance while offering more protection for whistleblowers.</td>
<td>Passed the House on 7/29/15 and awaiting consideration by the Senate</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Rep. Jeff Miller, R-FL</td>
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Template Invitation for Hosting Members of Congress at Your Chapter Meeting

[State] FEDERATION
NATIONAL ACTIVE and RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

Date

The Honorable [Insert your Representative or Senator's first and last names]
Attn: Scheduler
[Insert the district office address]
[Insert the city, state and ZIP Code]

Dear [Representative [OR] Senator Insert your Representative or Senator's last name],

I am writing to invite you to attend a chapter meeting of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association to discuss issues important to active and retired federal employees. The meeting will be held on [Insert date] at [Insert location of meeting]. We will discuss issues and legislation affecting active and retired federal workers. Members from several local chapters and statewide officers will be in attendance.

I will follow up in the next few days with a phone call. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at [Insert your phone number or email address].

Sincerely,

[Insert your first and last name]
[Insert your address]
[Insert your city, state and ZIP code]
Sample Thank You Letter to a Member of Congress

[State] FEDERATION
NATIONAL ACTIVE and RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

[Date]

The Honorable [Insert your representative or senator’s first and last names]
[Insert the Washington DC office address]
Washington, DC [Insert office ZIP code]

Dear [Representative [OR] Senator] [Insert your representative or senator’s last name]:

Thank you for making Allison Skare of your staff available to visit with us on May 10. We appreciate the time given to us and the cordial exchange we had with her.

NARFE members from our chapters in Columbia, Hannibal and Jefferson City participated in the visit and we provided signed letters from 27 of our members from the central Missouri and Kansas City areas. These letters expressed the deep concerns of NARFE members regarding their earned benefits and the outlook for future federal employees.

We understand our country’s budget and deficit problems and are already making sacrifices to assist in their resolution. However, we feel it is unfair to continually single out and scapegoat federal employees and retirees in addressing these issues.

We sincerely hope you will understand our concerns as you work to address our nation’s budget and deficit problems.

Sincerely,

[Name]
[Federation Name and Title]
[Insert your address]
[Insert your city, state and ZIP code]
[Telephone]
Grassroots Advocacy at Your Meeting

There are two easy ways NARFE members can participate in grassroots advocacy at chapter meetings: writing and calling Congress. Below are details on how to effectively execute these activities at a meeting.

Writing to Congress

Helping NARFE members write letters to Congress is an easy and effective way for them to voice their concerns. It is also a good way to generate a response from elected officials on our issues. Holding a letter-writing campaign at your meeting often takes only a few minutes. To hold a letter-writing campaign at your meeting:

1. Decide which type of letter will work best with your members: handwritten, pre-typed or postcards. Handwritten letters are the most effective as the personalization makes it more likely that members of Congress will respond. However, it can sometimes be difficult to encourage people to take the time to handwrite a letter. Pre-typed letters are easier in that members need only write their name and address at the bottom of a form letter. Postcards are another option because they are easy and quick for members to write and shorter than a full handwritten letter but still allow more personalization than a pre-typed letter.

2. Prepare for the meeting depending on what writing format you choose. If you are writing handwritten letters, print off sample letters or provide talking points that members can use to base their letters on. This will make writing their own letters less daunting. If you are writing a pre-typed letter, look at the letters available in the Legislative Action Center for reference. The Legislative Department also can provide personalized letters for your chapter that you can copy and make available to your members (please give the department at least one week’s notice). If you write the letters yourself, make sure you provide space for your members to leave their name, address and a short comment, and print off enough copies for everyone. If you are using postcards, bring blank postcards that are pre-addressed on one side. Then, provide talking points for members to use as a reference for their short message. Also bring pens for members to use.

3. At the meeting, set aside a couple of minutes to explain the process and write the letters. Make sure the members know to clearly write their name and address to help ensure they receive a response. Also, inform them that personalizing their letter makes a response more likely.

4. Collect the letters and deliver them to the member of Congress. Because sending mail to the Washington, DC, offices takes several weeks to go through security,
we recommend taking the letters to a local congressional office. You also can send them to the district office.

5. Wait for a response. At the next meeting, discuss the responses people received and plan any follow-up contact with the legislator.

6. If your meeting is held in a facility with Wi-Fi or Internet access, you can have a computer available for members to send emails. Have the web browser open to NARFE’s Legislative Action Center and members can take action as they sign in.

**Calling Congress**

Asking NARFE members to call Congress at your chapter meetings is an immediate way to spread NARFE’s message and very effective if there is a time-sensitive issue. Congressional offices are interested in hearing from constituents and keep track of the calls they receive, so the more NARFE members who call to discuss federal employee and retiree issues, the better. To do this effectively at your meeting:

1. Introduce the idea of calling Congress and explain why it is important. Show everyone how easy it is by making a call yourself, or explain what they can expect during the call.

2. Use NARFE’s toll-free line for the Capitol Switchboard – 1-866-220-0044 – and provide the phone numbers for the individual Washington, DC, offices in case the switchboard is busy. Only calls made through NARFE’s toll free line can be tracked by NARFE.

3. Print out scripts (sample script found [here](#)), from which members can read during the call, or print out talking points to help guide the conversation.

4. Take a few minutes to actually make the calls. Members should call all three of their members of Congress - their two senators and representative.

5. Ask for volunteers who are willing to share their cell phones, so those without a phone can still make their calls at the meeting.

If you would like your members to call Congress at a later date, print the instructions and script on a piece of colored paper to make it stand out. You also can include a reminder with this information in your chapter newsletter. However, helping NARFE members make calls at your meeting is the best way to ensure the calls are made.

As always, contact the Legislative Department at [leg@narfe.org](mailto:leg@narfe.org) or call 703-838-7760 with any question.
Hosting Members of Congress at Your Chapter Meeting

During recess periods, members of Congress are in their home states to hold events, meet with constituents and work out of their local offices. It is during this time that NARFE members have an extraordinary opportunity to reach out to their legislators and educate them about federal retiree and workforce issues.

A special chapter meeting is a great way to introduce legislators and/or their staff to NARFE members and educate them about our issues. Below are some tips on how to orchestrate a memorable visit.

Inviting a Legislator

*Time Frame: The length of a recess can vary from a week to over a month. Consult the 2015 Congressional Recess Calendar for exact dates.*

The event is simple: Work with other chapter presidents in your area to hold a joint chapter event and invite your representative, senators or their staff to attend.

It’s as easy as 1-2-3:
1. Pick a date and location and submit official scheduling requests using the sample chapter meeting request to the main district office of your legislator. Effective scheduling is the most important aspect of your event. You can fax and/or email it to the office scheduler. Be sure to call to follow up.

2. You also can invite multiple congressional offices to attend your chapter meeting for a Q&A forum to hear each office’s different positions on the issues. Make sure to set aside some time for a meet-and-greet so individual NARFE members can meet the guests.

3. If only one member of Congress or their staff attends, set aside time for them to speak and answer questions, as well as for a meet-and-greet with the NARFE members in attendance.

Run of Show for Your Chapter Meeting

**NARFE Members Arrive**

- NARFE members from invited chapters arrive, mingle briefly and take their seats.

- Chapter president moves to front of the room and introduces the event.
Introductions

- Chapter president gives brief introduction about the issues impacting NARFE members (referring to the Toolkit fact sheets).

- Chapter president introduces the panel guests (if multiple congressional offices sent representatives) or the single speaker (if only one).

- Chapter president describes the format of the event: Speaker(s) introduce themselves and talk about issues. NARFE members then ask questions of the speaker(s), who answer in turn.

The Speaker(s)

- Chapter president introduces each speaker and gives them several minutes for an introductory statement.

- After all introductions are complete, NARFE members are invited to raise their hands to ask questions. Each speaker takes turns answering the questions.

- After all questions are asked or the allotted time of the event nears its end, the chapter president asks each speaker to conclude with a few thoughts.

- If there are several speakers, it will help to have a moderator for the meeting.

Meet-and-Greet

- Chapter president thanks the speaker(s) and opens up the event for individual NARFE members to meet and speak with them.

Following Your Meeting

*Timeline: No later than a week following meeting*

Send a Thank You

Following your chapter meeting, send the member of Congress a thank you note for attending the meeting. If you promised follow-up information, this is a prime opportunity to send it. If the member agreed to take action on legislation, politely remind them or thank them again for taking action.

Tell Headquarters About Your Meeting
Email advocacyinaction@narfe.org to tell headquarters about your meeting. This information is important in our continued communications with members of Congress.
Congressional Outreach at Federation Conventions

Any time multiple NARFE members are gathered together is a great time to participate in the Protect America’s Heartbeat campaign. Federation conventions provide great opportunities for NARFE members to contact their leaders in Washington, DC.

Letters

Print out letters for NARFE members to sign and mail to their members of Congress. The most recent action letter is available on the Legislative Action Center or by requesting one from NARFE’s Legislative Department.

For members who want to personalize or write their own letters, provide a notepad and sample letters. Make sure to provide the correct addresses for headings and envelopes.

You can collect all of the letters and mail them together to your member of Congress’ local office or provide individual envelopes for people to use. You also can collect the letters and present them to the elected official or a representative if they will be attending your convention. Finally, you can take the collected letters to your member’s local office following the convention. Or you can send all the letters to the NARFE Legislative Department and we’ll drop them off at the Washington, DC, office of your members of Congress.

If you have Internet access at the convention venue, you can provide the opportunity for NARFE members to send emails. In the back of the main convention room, have a laptop (or a few) set up at the NARFE Legislative Action Center. Members can complete the form and send an email to their congressional representatives in a few minutes.

Phone Calls

During breaks in the activity or if the convention is ahead of schedule, you can have your members call their elected officials from cell phones. Prior to breaks, have somebody announce the toll-free phone number. If you provide scripts for your members, include the phone number on the top of the script.

NARFE provides a toll-free number to the Capitol Switchboard: 1-866-220-0044. NARFE is able to track the number of callers using this number and can provide results to chapter or federation leaders. You also can provide your members the direct phone number to their representative’s or senators’ offices, but NARFE is not able to track those calls.
You also can provide a phone script for your members, a sample of which is available here or by requesting the most up-to-date one from NARFE Headquarters. Have copies of the script at the registration table or at tables in the convention meeting space.

**Not Hosting a Convention This Year?**

You can still get involved!

You can pick a date and have your own statewide call-in day. Or email your members with a link to the email on the Legislative Action Center or a sample letter for them to mail to their members of Congress.
Utilizing Your Newsletter

Your chapter and federation newsletters are prime spaces in which to update your members on legislation, as well as ask them to take action.

In general, the legislative section of your chapter or federation newsletter should focus on updating members on NARFE legislative issues. The NARFE Legislative Department sends monthly legislative updates to presidents and legislative officers at the federation and chapter level. These monthly updates are meant to assist you in writing your legislative column. You also can get the latest information from the weekly Hotline. Both of these resources are emailed via GEMS.

When you include a legislative update that involves timely legislation, make sure to ask your members to take a specific action. The newsletter space is a great time to “make the ask.”

You also can use the legislative column to ask your members to take legislative action. Make sure you provide all of the necessary information for your members to take action. If you tell them to write a letter, give them the address. If you tell them to make a phone call, provide the phone number.

If space provides, include grassroots activity in places outside the traditional column in case people skip the legislative section. If there is an upcoming action, post it on the front page in a quick blurb. Or ask the president to include it in the president’s column.

You can include a letter for people to remove, sign and mail back in. You also can include talking points and instructions so that members can write their own letters. If you do not have the space to include the letter or the phone script, you can direct people to the NARFE Legislative website (http://www.narfe.org/legislation/) or Legislative Action Center (http://capwiz.com/narfe/home/). Make sure you provide the web address – and if you have an electronic newsletter, include the hyperlink.
Representing NARFE at Community Events

*NARFE members are active in their communities, and this activism can provide an opportunity for your chapter or federation to participate as well. Here are some ways to get your chapter involved.*

**Community Carnivals/County Fairs**

Find out if NARFE can host a table or booth at community carnivals or your county fair. Attending these events allows you to reach out to possible members, people who may care about our issues but aren’t affiliated with NARFE, and legislators who attend.

Websites for the organizers of the events will frequently have information on how to host a table. If not, just call the organizers and ask.

**Parades**

NARFE chapters across the country participate in holiday parades. Again, the city or organizer of the parade will have information on who can participate. Many community parades allow participants to drive the parade route so you may not have to walk.

**Show Your NARFE Pride**

Whether attending or volunteering at a community event, wear your NARFE materials to show off your federal employment pride! Wear your hats, T-shirts and buttons!
How to Create a Facebook Organization Page

Federation and chapter Facebook pages are a great way to reach out to current members and to engage prospective members. On your federation or chapter Facebook page, you can post information about upcoming meetings, post pictures from events and share information with your members and the larger community. To create your own federation or chapter Facebook page, follow the steps below.

1) First, choose the person who will create and be the administrator of your NARFE chapter Facebook page. This is usually your federation or chapter president or a member of your board.

2) Go to www.facebook.com.

3) Click “Create a Page” located at the bottom right of the page.
4) You will arrive at the “Create a Page” page. If you do not have a Facebook account, continue with the below instructions.

**If you do have a Facebook account, sign in at the top of the page and continue with instruction 4b.**

a) First, select the “Company, Organization or Institution” option. The “Company, Organization or Institution” icon will scroll up and reveal the “Join” box.

i) Step 1: Under the “Choose a category” box, choose “Non-Profit Organization” as your organization type.

ii) Step 2: Enter your NARFE Chapter name as your “Company Name” for example, NARFE Chapter 1234, City, State.

iii) Step 3: Select “I agree to Facebook Pages Terms” then click “Get Started.”
iv) You will arrive at “Create a Facebook Account.” Create a Facebook account. Continue with step 5.
4b) After you sign in to your Facebook account, you will arrive at the “Create a Page” page. Click the “Company, Organization or Institution” icon. The “Company, Organization, or Institution” icon will scroll up and reveal the “Join” box.

i) Step 1: Under the “Choose a category” box, choose “Non-Profit Organization” as your organization type.

ii) Step 2: Enter your NARFE Chapter name as your “Company Name” for example, NARFE Chapter 1234, City, State.

iii) Step 3: Select “I agree to Facebook Pages Terms” then click “Get Started.”
5) You have arrived at the “Set Up” page.

a) First, you need to set up the “About” section on your chapter page.
   i) Step 1: In the “Basic Information” box, type a sentence or two describing your federation or chapter. For example: NARFE (_______) Chapter X is _______.

   ii) Step 2: Type your federation or chapter website URL. If you don’t have a website, simply leave this blank, or use www.narfe.org.

   iii) Step 3: Click “Yes” to both disclaimer statements.

   iv) Step 4: Click” Save Info.”
b) Next, you will upload a page profile picture.
   i) First, find your NARFE federation or chapter logo or another image that reflects your organization and save it to your computer.

   ii) Click “Upload From Computer” and find the photo on your computer to upload. Next click “Save Photo” to post a page profile picture. After the picture is uploaded, click “Next.”

c) You have arrived at the “Enable Ads” set-up step. Simply click “Skip.”
6) Congratulations! You have successfully created your NARFE federation or chapter Facebook page.
7) Once you arrive at your federation or chapter Facebook page, there are a few more steps to complete your page set-up.

a) Step 1: Click on “Add a Cover” to add a cover photo to your page. This can be a picture of a chapter meeting or event, a few of your members, or your board.

b) Step 2: Click on the “About” section and edit the “About” section for your page to add more specific federation or chapter information. This information can include contact information, where and when your chapter meets and the general geographic area of your federation or chapter.

c) Step 3: Start posting.

NARFE state federations and chapters across the country are using Facebook to reach out to current members and to engage prospective members. To see an example of a successful Facebook page, visit the below NARFE chapter Facebook pages:

- Virginia NARFE Peninsula Chapter 682
- Maryland NARFE Greater Bowie Crofton Chapter 1747
- Illinois NARFE Federation
Facebook Organization Page Dos and Don’ts

You’ve created a NARFE federation or chapter Facebook page, now what? Before you start posting, please keep these dos and don’ts in mind to ensure your state federation or chapter Facebook page is successful.

Dos
- **Do** follow NARFE National Headquarters Facebook page.
  Simply go to [www.facebook.com/NARFEHQ](http://www.facebook.com/NARFEHQ) and click “Like” to follow NARFE National Headquarters on Facebook.

- **Do** appoint a primary Facebook page administrator.
  Facebook provides organization pages and several administrator roles, allowing different levels of access to those managing an organization page. Make sure at least one person is the overall “Manager” of your page. This should be the primary person in charge of posting and editing the page.

- **Do** post regularly and schedule posts.
  By posting regularly, you ensure that you’re providing relevant and timely information to the members following your page without overwhelming their newsfeed. We recommend posting at least once a week but not more than twice per day.

  Another great Facebook feature is the ability to schedule posts for any date and time in the future. This way you can space out your posts and have posts appear during peak Facebook usage times for your page. Experiment with your posts to see what days and times your members are viewing your posts the most.

- **Do** remember that NARFE is a nonpartisan organization.
  It is important for us as NARFE members to be nonpartisan when representing and participating in NARFE activities, including social media activities. While we each have the right to our own beliefs and party affiliation, these should not be reflected when representing NARFE.

Don’ts
- **Don’t** neglect announcing your new Facebook page in your member communications.
  One of the most important first steps when launching a Facebook page is making sure your target audience is aware that your page exists. An easy way to announce your federation or chapter Facebook page is to include information about the page in your member communications. And don’t forget
to “Like” your federation or chapter Facebook page from your personal Facebook account, if you have one.

Also, make sure to let NARFE Legislative staff know that you’ve launched a Facebook page so we can like your page and share your posts.

- **Don’t** forget to make your posts easy to read and include a call to action. Facebook allows you to customize posts in several ways to ensure your posts are easy to read in your follower’s newsfeed.

For example, when posting a URL, Facebook auto-populates a box that includes your original URL. You can then remove the URL from your post, making your post content easier to read. Look at the post examples below. Which is easier to read, #1 or #2?

Another great way to enhance the engagement of your page followers is to include a call to action in your post. By simply asking your followers to “LIKE,” “SHARE” or “COMMENT” on a post, you remind them to take action and increase engagement.

- **Don’t** disregard your Facebook Insights. Facebook provides a plethora of engagement information through your page Insights, including the reach of your posts and whether your followers are interacting with your page. In looking at your Insights, you can better understand the best time of day to schedule posts to increase post views or see if a specific post performed better than others.

To view your page Insights, simply go to the “Admin Panel” on your page and click “See All” in the Insights box.
- **Don’t** forget that your federation or chapter Facebook page is an extension of NARFE.
  
  While Facebook is a great place to share information and interact with NARFE members informally, please remember that all posts on NARFE federation or chapter pages should enhance the mission of NARFE. Before posting, take a second consider whether the post content is appropriate for public consumption as being representative of NARFE.