



# NARFE Advocacy Priorities Amid Continued Threats

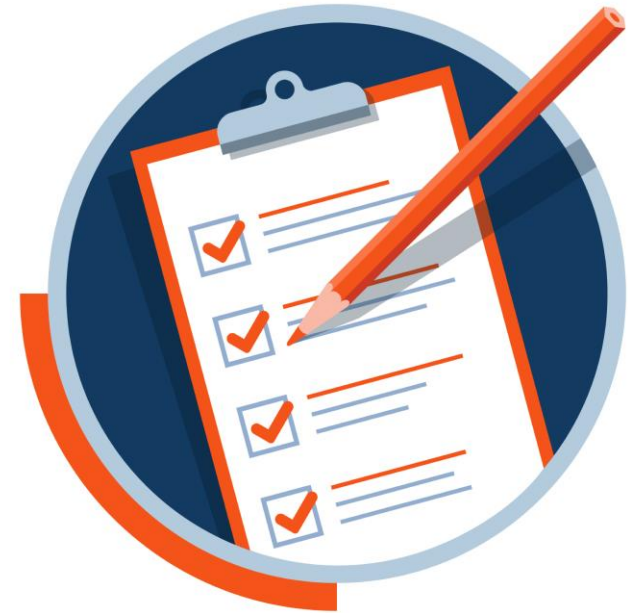
March 25, 2026

**Presentation to Florida District Meeting  
Presented by John Hatton, SVP, Policy and Programs, NARFE**

*Closed captioning available on the recorded session of this webinar.*



- **Recap of Late 2024/Early 2025 Efforts**
- **Advocacy Priorities**
- **Government Shutdown/Funding**
- **Advocacy Actions Summary**
- **Questions & Answers**



# Recap of 2024/Early 2025 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

- **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



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

# Advocacy Priorities



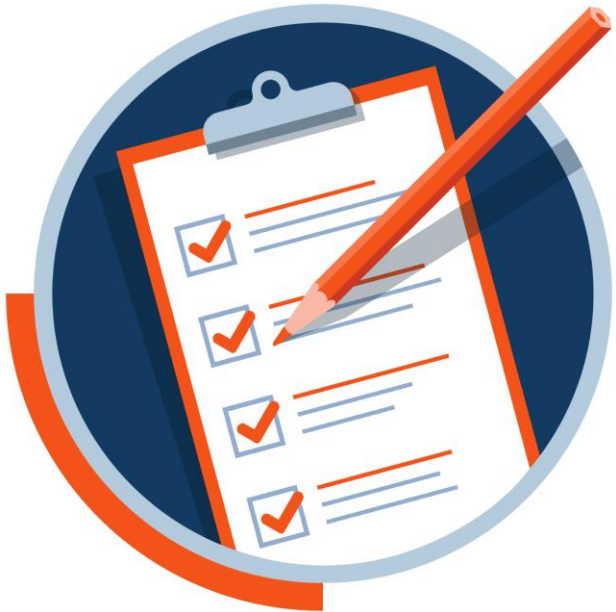
## Social Security Fairness Act, P.L. 118-273

- **Passed January 5, 2025**
- **Effective Date**
  - Applies to benefits payable after December 2023
- **Implementation**
  - Social Security Administration (SSA) 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 to Letter & Follow-Up
      - Next Steps: Discussion 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

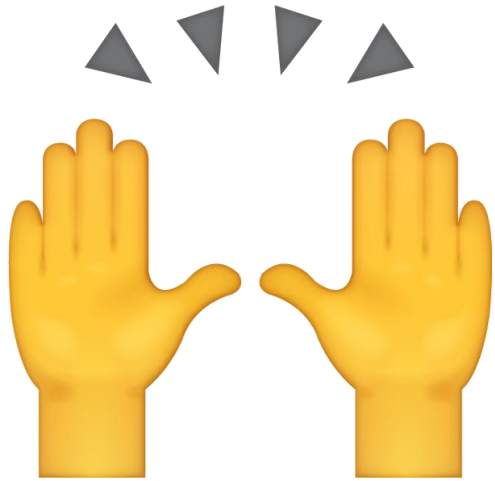


- Fee for Merit Systems Protection Board Appeals
  - Would undermine merit-based civil service
- Audit of FEHB to Ensure Covered Family Members are Eligible for Coverage
  - NARFE did NOT oppose



## 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 Merit-Based Civil Service

-  **Elimination of Appeal Rights for Probationary Employees, RIFs, and Suitability Determinations**
  - NARFE commented/submitted comments on proposed rules.
  - TBD to what extent these authorities will be utilized.





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

-  • **Return to Office Mandate**
-  • **Hiring Freeze**
  - 90 Days Initially, Extended Through the Year
-  • **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 originally
  
-  • **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
  - Completed (Mostly) by September 30, 2025
  - Total Reduction in Force Estimates
    - OPM: Approximately a 220,000 reduction in force overall by end of 2025



## 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)**
  - 71 cosponsors in House, 17 in Senate
- **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 via phone
- Delays processing transactions (e.g., changes to health benefits)
- Delays at agency/payroll stage sending claims to OPM
- Difficulty accessing 1099-R forms

# Government Shutdown / Funding

# Government Shutdown / Funding



## Recap

- **Record-Long, 43-day Government Shutdown**
  - Funding authority for federal agencies expired at end of day September 30, 2025.
  - Shutdown ended on November 12, 2025
- **House Republicans Passed Short-Term Continuing Resolution**
  - House Republicans left DC after September 19 votes
- **No Bipartisan Consensus in Senate**
- **Democrats Asked For:**
  - Enforceable Bipartisan Agreement
    - Protections Against Impoundments, Rescissions
  - Extension of Enhanced ACA Premium Subsidies
  - Additional Priorities (Reverse Medicaid Cuts, e.g.) Included in Counterproposal



## Threats to Federal Jobs and Pay

- **New RIFs Related to Shutdown**
  - Notices issued 10/10/25
  
- **No Backpay for Furloughed Employees**
  - OMB Memo Questioning Application of Law Requiring Backpay



## Summary of NARFE Responses

- **Message**
  - Urged Good Faith Bipartisan Negotiations
  - Reverse RIFs
  - Ensure Backpay
  - Pay Feds Pending Resolution
- **Media Statements / Interviews**
- **Action Letters / Letters to Congress / Lobbying**





## Resolution and Ongoing Debate

- **Prohibition on RIFs**
  - No RIFS through at least January 30
  - Blocked implementation of noticed RIFs
- **Backpay for Feds**
- **Progress on Full-Year Funding**
  - 11 of 12 bills passed on bipartisan basis in deal to reopen the government
  - Dispute remains with Homeland Security funding
  - Partial Government Shutdown of DHS ongoing since February 14

# Advocacy Actions Summary

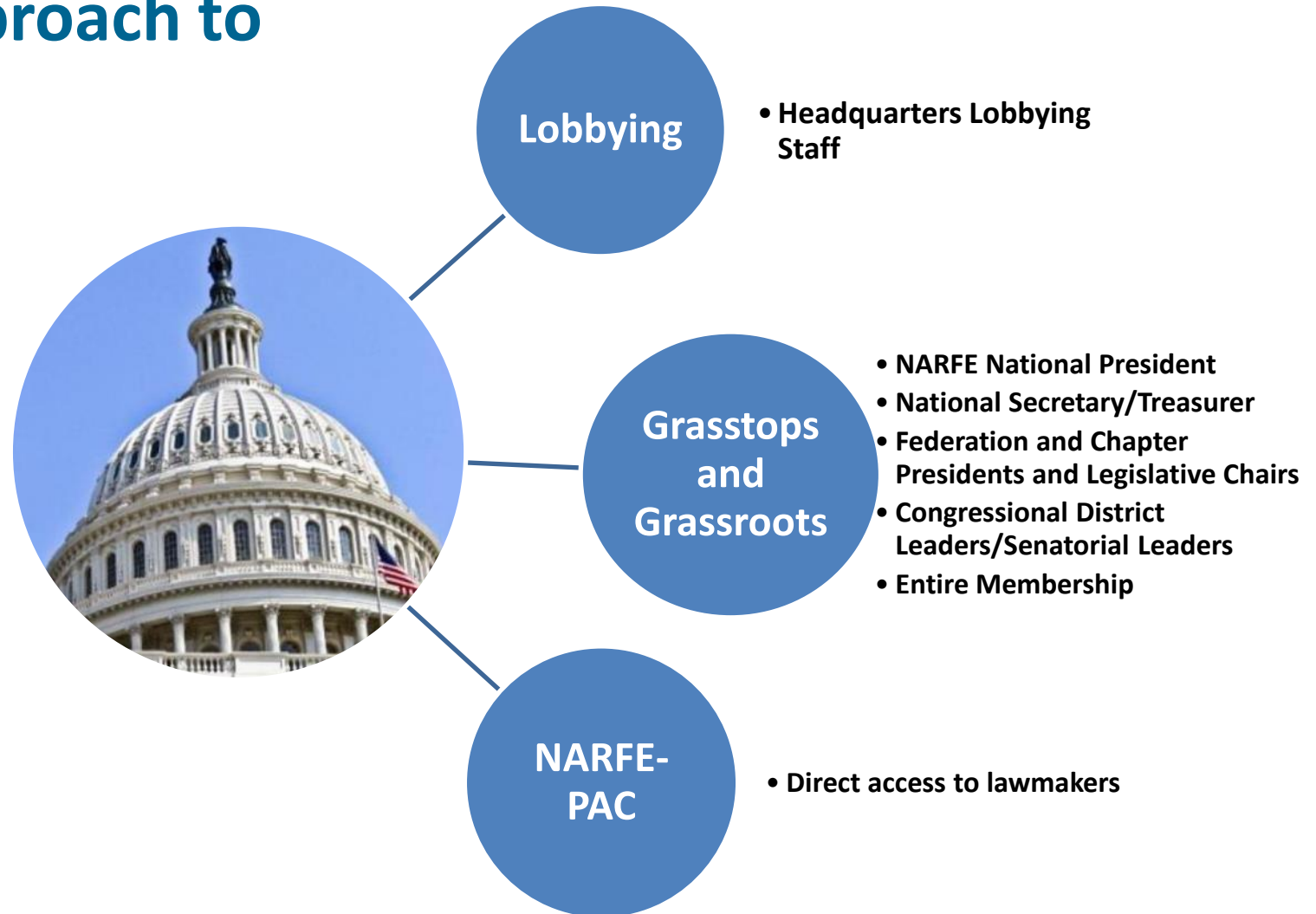
# Advocacy Actions Summary



## 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



## Why NARFE-PAC Is Critical

Helps elect Fed-  
friendly members  
of Congress

Builds strong  
relationships with  
lawmakers

Ensures federal  
community is  
political force

Pools individual  
contributions to  
maximize impact

Empowers  
strongest  
supporters



## 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?**