



NARFE NEWSLETTER

GREATER BOWIE-CROFTON AREA CHAPTER 1747

National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association

Volume 38 No. 6

narfe.org/chapter1747

February 2020

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS are held at the Bowie Senior Center, 14900 Health Center Drive Bowie, 20716 in Room 4. Meeting dates are the third Thursday of the month at 10:00 AM except in July and August. There is never a charge to attend and all meetings are open to the public. Please check your current newsletter or our website for any changes.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS are held the first Thursday of the month at 10:00 AM in Conference Room 125, Bowie Senior Center. All chapter members are welcome.

POSTAL ADDRESS: NARFE Chapter 1747, P.O. Box 504, Bowie, MD 20718

NOTE: Chapter meetings are cancelled when Prince George's County schools are closed due to inclement weather. Otherwise, meetings are held as scheduled.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Feb 6	Executive Board Meeting, Bowie Senior Center, 10a-Noon
Feb 13	Webinar, Federal Benefits Institute 2:00p, Understanding the FERS Basic Benefit
Feb 14	Valentine's Day
Feb 17	President's Day
Feb 20	General Meeting, Ledo Pizza, Crofton, MD 11a-1:30p, R. Anthony Pasciuto, Esq. Byrd & Byrd, Estate Planning
Feb 26	Ash Wednesday
Feb 27	Webinar, Federal Benefits Institute 2:00p, TSP-Your Ticket to a Secure Future

JOIN US

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Frank Lee

Taxes, including the Kirwan Taxes, will be a recurring theme in the current session of the MD General Assembly. The Kirwan Commission has proposed a broad overhaul of the K-12 state education system in the next 10 years with the legislative Democratic leaders pushing for full funding for the commission's recommendations. Overall, the commission called for state and local governments to spend \$3.8 billion more on education by 2030. The legislative leaders have pledged not to raise taxes to implement the Kirwan Commission recommendations. However, given the proposed expansion of the State's education system, it may not be possible to implement the plan without an increase in revenue. Therefore, the issue becomes how much education can Maryland afford or support. The debate on how to fund the Kirwan Commission's recommendations will be very interesting.

As you know, NARFE has been lobbying for a change in the MD tax regulations for the past 2 years to permit MD taxpayers to itemize on their MD tax return even if they don't itemize on their Federal return. As a result of the 2017 Federal

tax reform act, MD taxpayers who don't itemize on their Federal tax return can no longer itemize on their MD tax return. This change resulted in an unintended tax increase for many Maryland tax payers. A NARFE member said at the January General Meeting that he paid several hundred dollars more in Maryland taxes for 2018 because he could no longer itemize on his Maryland return. We need to change the MD law so that MD taxpayers can itemize on their MD return even if they don't itemize on their Federal return. For 2020, the MD NARFE Federation will be working with AARP and other senior groups to lobby for this change.

Maryland is a high tax state that discourages "aging in place" and encourages migration to senior friendly states such as Delaware and North Carolina. NARFE has been trying for years to convince the MD General Assembly to eliminate or significantly reduce taxes on retirement income so more Marylanders will retire in Maryland. Since seniors tend to have more money than younger people, this move would help increase State revenue by keeping more money in Maryland. Governor Hogan has introduced two bills, **SB 278** and **HB 342** to reduce the State tax burden on seniors. Please see the State Legislation article for details on the bills and contact your State legislators to support these bills.

In summary, NARFE has much work to do in seeking tax relief for seniors in Maryland. We must find effective ways to make our voices heard.

HAPPY GROUNDHOG DAY – February 2



Future Presentations

We have some exciting presentations scheduled for this Winter and Spring beginning this month with R. Anthony Pasciuto, Byrd, who is an attorney from Byrd & Byrd. He will talk on Estate Planning. Please plan to attend these exciting presentations, as you must be present to receive the benefits of these presentations.

General Meeting – Ledo Pizza

The February 20, 2020 General Meeting will be held at the Ledo Pizza restaurant in Crofton where we had a very successful Pizza Party on September 19. Pizza along with other dishes will be served. Their address is 1286 MD-3, Crofton, MD 21114. We will hold our General Meeting at 11:00a and then have food served at noon. The cost will be \$10 per person. R. Anthony Pasciuto, Esq., from Byrd & Byrd will talk on Estate Planning. Please make your reservation for this exciting event by completing the reservation form and sending it to our post office box in Bowie.

NARFE Fair



In spite of the threat of snow, 13 people including long-time NARFE members, new NARFE members, new retirees interested in NARFE and an active Federal employee attended the NARFE Fair on January 18. We had a lively and informative discussion on the benefits of NARFE. Kent Nilsson, our chapter Vice President, said that NARFE was “the only organization devoted to protecting the rights and benefits of civilian Federal employees and retirees.” I added that at the local level, Chapter 1747 holds monthly presentations on subjects of special interest to Federal retirees and senior citizens. I said that Chapter 1747 provides services and information to enable Federal retirees and senior citizens to enrich their lives. At the end of the Fair, three new retirees signed up for NARFE and Chapter 1747 and an active Federal employee decided to join our chapter. The NARFE Fair is just the beginning of our recruitment drive. We plan to participate in other events including health fairs and pre-retirement seminars to recruit new members for NARFE and Chapter 1747.

Chapter 1747 is the second largest chapter in the Maryland Federation with over 550 members. We know that more than 300 of our members live in the greater Bowie area. With many Federal employees retiring, we know that there are many potential NARFE members in the Bowie area. We intend to reach out to them and get them to join NARFE. Please help us by telling your friends and family who are Federal employees and retirees about NARFE and ask them to come to our meetings to find out more about NARFE. (Picture by Louise Cole)

New Members

The following individuals have joined NARFE and Chapter 1747: Alice Arnold, Bill Lesage, and Twanna Thompson. In addition, Kim Johnson will be joining our chapter. Welcome to Chapter 1747. We look forward to their participation in our chapter.

Meeting with New and Current Members

We would like to meet with new chapter members and current chapter members who would like to become more active in our chapter on Thursday, February 6

at the Bowie Senior Center before our Executive Board meeting at 9:00a to find out more about your background, interests, and skills to see how you can play a bigger role in our chapter. Please let me know by E-mail filee0716@verizon.net if you would like to attend this meeting so that I know how many are coming and whether I need to book a bigger meeting room at the Senior Center. You are also invited to stay and attend our Executive Board meeting following this meeting at 10a.

MD Federation Meeting

The MD Federation has scheduled a Federation Board Meeting at the Bowie Comfort Inn for Friday, Feb 7, 2020. As a Chapter member, you are invited to attend this meeting. This will be an opportunity for new members to meet our MD Federation leaders and see how the Federation operates. Guest Speakers will include Major General Omar Jones, IV, the Commander of the U.S. Army Military District of Washington and Congressman David J. Trone. Lunch will be included and your registration fee will be paid by the chapter. I encourage you to sign up for this conference to see how the MD NARFE Federation operates. If you can attend this conference, please let me know before Jan 30.

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

Lillie Watson

The number of Chapter 1747 Members as of January 20, 2020 is 568. Updated activity reports on Chapter 1747 members are currently unavailable due to a system change.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

Kent Nilsson

With the beginning of the second year of the 116th Congress, bills from the previous year have been carried over even though, in many cases, no further action has been taken. Listed below is pending legislation that may affect active and/or retired employees.

H.R. 141/S.521 - (Social Security Fairness Act of 2019). This bill repeals both the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP). Status: H.R. 1521 was referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means. S.521 was referred to the Senate Committee on Finance.

H.R. 3934 - (Equal Treatment of Public Servants Act of 2019), Repeal of the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP): H.R.3934 provides an immediate \$100/month payment to the primary worker turning 62 before 2022, and a \$50/month spousal benefit. H.R. 3934 includes a new formula for those turning 62 after 2022 through 2060 and provides that recipients receive either those payments or those under the new formula, whichever is higher. Annuitants who begin to receive payments after 2060 would only be entitled to payments under the new formula. Status: Referred to House Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 4540 - (The Public Servants Protection and Fairness Act) would also repeal the WEP. H.R. 4540 provides an immediate \$150/month payment no spousal payment. This bill uses the same formula for all annuitants receiving benefits after 2022 as H.R. 3934 but with no 2060 transition. NARFE supports both WEP bills. Not wanting to choose between them, NARFE asks that you support having Congress reconcile those bills. Status: Referred to House Committee on Ways and Means.

H.R. 1553 - (Fair COLA for Seniors Act). This bill requires that COLA adjustments for seniors be calculated using the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly (CPI-E) instead of the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W). Proponents contend that while the CPI-W can track the spending habits of the urban work force, it does not account for the spending habits of seniors. For example, the cost of medical care has outpaced the cost of other consumer goods and services. And, on average, seniors spend almost twice that of the U.S. population as a whole. Status: Referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means, Veterans Affairs, Oversight and Reform, and Armed Forces.

H.R. 2382/S.2965 - (The USPS Fairness Act). These bills remove the requirement that the U.S. Postal Service fully pre-fund the future health benefits of its retirees. Status: H.R. 2382 - referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Reform. S.2965 - referred to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1254 - (The Equal COLA Act). This Act would insure that FERS employees receive the same COLA pay adjustments as CSRS employees. Status: Referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Reform.

H.R. 3348/S.1898 - (Merit Act). These bills streamline the employee removal process by reducing due process for federal employees. Status: H.R. 3348 referred to the House Committee on Oversight and reform. S. 1898 - referred to Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 3726 - (RECOVER Act). This bill provides lifetime identity protection for individuals affected by the 2015 OPM data breach. Status: Referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Reform.

H.R. 1073/S.426 - (Federal Civilian Adjustment of Income Rates (FAIR)Act). This bill provides an average 3.6 percent federal pay raise in 2020. Status: Referred to House Committees on Oversight and Reform and House Administration. S.426 - referred to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1534/S.174 - (Federal Employees Paid Leave Act of 2019). This bill provides 12 weeks of paid leave in connection with the birth, adoption or foster placement of a child and other medical conditions to federal employees. Status: H.R. 1534 -referred to the House Committees on Oversight and Reform and Administration. Sen.1174 - Referred to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs.

H.R. 3506 - (Wage Grade Employee Parity Act). This legislation requires that the percentage increase in rates of basic pay for Wage Grade federal employees is equal to the percentage increase received by General Schedule.

STATE LEGISLATION
Ed Bice

RETIREE TAX RELIEF

Governor Larry Hogan(R) has introduced bills titled " Retirement Tax Reduction Act of 2020" in the legislature. The bills are SB 278 and HB 342. The bills allow a subtraction modification for Maryland income tax for up to \$100,000 of income each year. For example, if a Maryland tax payer had income of \$50,000 the taxpayer would not pay any state income tax under this bill. This tax bill is going to be a tough sell in the legislature this year because of the Kirwan Commission need for revenue to support its goals. The Senate President and House Speaker have said they will not increase income, property or sales taxes to fund the Kirwan program. Our support is vital and necessary for passing the above bills by contacting your senator and delegates.

District 23
Senator Peters
Tel:301 858 3631
email: douglas.peters@senate.state.md.us

District 33
Senator Reilly
Tel:410 841 3568
email: edward.reilly@senate.state.md.us

Delegate Holmes
Tel:301-858-3310
email: marvin.holmes@house.state.md.us

Delegate Bagnall
Tel: 410-841-3406
email: heather.bagnall@house.state.md.us

Delegate Valentino Smith
Tel: 301-858-3101
email: Geraldine.valentino@house.state.md.us

Delegate Malone
Tel: 410-841-3510
email: michael.malone@house.state.md.us

Delegate Watson
Tel: 301-858-3448
email: ron.watson@house.state.md.us

Delegate Saab
Tel: 410-841-3551
email: sid.saab@house.state.md.us

TREASURERS REPORT	
Balance on: November 31, 2019	\$10,719.63
Income:	\$1,444.28
Expenses:	\$1,336.80
Balance on: December 31, 2019	\$10,827.11
 Reserve for Alzheimer's Fund	 \$11.00

CHAPTER 1747 OFFICERS

Officers	Name	Contact #	E-Mail Address
President	Frank Lee	410-672-5065	flee0716@verizon.net
Vice President	Kent Nilsson	301-613-9868	kentnilsson@live.com
Treasurer	Vanessa Washington	301-883-4904	vwash411@comcast.net
Asst. Treasurer	Louise Cole	410-672-6528	col9135@aol.com
Secretary	Vacant	--	--
Committee Chairs			
Federal Legislation	Kent Nilsson	301-613-9868	kentnilsson@live.com
State Legislation	Edward Bice	301-464-3748	de3637@verizon.net
Chapter Editor	Vanessa Washington	301-883-4904	vwash411@comcast.net
Alzheimer Chair	Edward Bice	301-464-3748	de3637@verizon.net
NARFE/PAC Chair	Edward Bice	301-464-3748	de3637@verizon.net
Network Coordinator	Vanessa Washington	301-883-4904	vwash411@comcast.net
Membership Chair	Lillie Watson	301-383-1597	Lwatson16@hotmail.com
Service Officer	Rhonda Hackley	301-335-0493	rmhackley716@gmail.com

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Dues payments, gifts, and contributions to NARFE are not deductible as Charitable Contributions for income tax purposes.



NATIONAL ACTIVE AND RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES
(NARFE CHAPTER 1747 - FEBRUARY GENERAL MEETING AND LUNCHEON)

LEDO'S PIZZA

LOCATION: 1286 MD-3, Crofton, MD 21114 **Date:** February 20, 2020 **TIME:** 11:00A-2:00P

Price: **\$10.00** includes: a selection of pizzas, tossed salad, chicken fingers, fries & a non-alcoholic beverage.
Space is limited, so reserve your space today by completing the form below and returning by mail or at the January general meeting.

Event Registration Form

Name: _____
Telephone _____ Address: _____
Email _____ Number of attendees _____
Amount PAID (\$10 X #ATTENDEES) _____ Name of Guest(s): _____

Mail this form with your check to: Make checks payable to NARFE Chapter 1747
NARFE Chapter 1747, P.O. Box 504, Bowie, MD 20718
All payments are due by February 14, 2020

**Greater Bowie-Crofton Area
NARFE Chapter 1747
P.O. BOX 504
BOWIE, MD 20718-0504
Narfe1747.org**

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