



NARFE NEWSLETTER

GREATER BOWIE-CROFTON AREA CHAPTER 1747
National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association

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February 2021

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.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Virtual Meetings Using Zoom

- Feb 4** Executive Board Meeting, 10a
Virtual Meeting Using Zoom
- Feb 11** NARFE Webinar 2:00p, Understanding Telehealth
- Feb 18** NARFE Advocacy Program Update, 10a
Marsha Goad, Virtual Meeting Using Zoom
- Feb 18** Spotlight on Chapters, Dr. Sudha Haley, 10a
NARFE Advocacy Program Update, Marsha Goad
Virtual Meeting Using Zoom
- Mar 4** Executive Board Meeting, 10a
Virtual Meeting Using Zoom
- Mar 18** Common Foot Problems, 10a
Dr. La Vergne Andre
Virtual Meeting Using Zoom

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Frank Lee

Now that the debate about election results is over, we must look at the major problems facing the new President. The most important and immediate problem is to develop and implement a strong national program based on science to defeat coronavirus. The new President must convince citizens to follow public health guidelines including the wearing of face masks, following social distancing and avoiding large gatherings to reduce the spread of coronavirus. He must also oversee the distribution and administration of millions of doses of coronavirus vaccine across the U.S. in a short time to enable the population to achieve herd immunity to reduce the spread of the virus. He will need to provide the states with financial and logistical assistance to enable them to administer the vaccine to millions of people in a short time. In his emergency relief plan, the President proposed spending \$400 billion to fight coronavirus with more

vaccines and testing. He included \$20 billion for his universal vaccination plan. He promised to deliver 100 million vaccine shots in 100 days. This effort will be the most ambitious vaccination program in modern history.

Once coronavirus has been brought under control, we can fully reopen our economy, safely restore in-person learning in schools and begin to return to normalcy. Hopefully, this will happen by the latter half of 2021.

The President must find ways to assist more than 12 million people who have lost their jobs and income because of the pandemic. These people are unable to feed their families and are in danger of being evicted and losing their homes. In his emergency relief package, the President is proposing to spend more than \$1 trillion in direct aid to families including increased stimulus payments and increased unemployment insurance benefits.

The President must also provide financial assistance to states who have lost income during the pandemic because their economies have been shut down and because they have been forced to spend large sums of monies to fight coronavirus. In his emergency relief package, the President proposed \$350 billion in emergency funding for state, local and tribal governments.

The President must also develop a program to help the economy recover once coronavirus has been brought under control. The coronavirus pandemic destroyed more than 5 years of economic growth. A major part of this effort will be his proposal to improve our infrastructure which will include restoring our bridges and highways and other parts of our infrastructure. In his emergency relief package, the President is proposing 14 weeks of paid sick and family medical leave for millions of workers and grants to more than 1 million small businesses and \$35 million for low-interest loans for clean energy investments.



The President will address problems resulting from climate change. We have been witnessing a growth of fires and flooding in coastal areas and other impacts from man-made activity. President Trump called climate change a hoax and did not believe in climate change. The new President recognizes climate change and will develop policies to address its effects.

The President recognizes racial injustice and will identify ways to address this problem. We must find ways to ensure that the killing of innocent people like George Floyd and Brianna Taylor do not continue.

The President will have to address many problems when he takes office on January 20. He is a decent man dedicated to addressing the needs of all Americans. We must support him and help him address our many problems.

Collection for Alzheimer's Fund

We were able to collect more than \$250.00 during our recent solicitation for the Alzheimer's Fund. Monies collected will be forwarded to the MD. Federation. Thanks for your contribution.

Joining Zoom Meetings

Thanks to those who are participating in our monthly chapter meetings using Zoom. I encourage those who have not yet done so to please join our monthly meetings using Zoom. While meeting through Zoom may not be as personal as meeting in person, this is the way we have to communicate until the pandemic is over and we can resume in person meetings. The important thing is that through Zoom, we can still hold our monthly meetings and provide you information on the status of Federal benefits and issues and information on subjects of special interest to senior citizens.

Chapter 1747 Internship Program

We have started an internship program to get more members involved in our operations, learn how the chapter operates and be potential new officers. This is especially important because we will have an election for officers in May 2021 and need to ensure that we have enough officers to lead the chapter into the future. Through this program, we have found two new officers, Bruce Thoman our new Network Coordinator and Charles Smith our new Social Media Coordinator. Please let me know if you would like to join the internship program and get involved in the operation of our chapter.

Coronavirus in the U.S.

As of 1-19-21, the U.S. had 24,355,434 coronavirus cases and a total of 401,087 related deaths. More than 38,000 people have died during the 1st two weeks of 2021. The U.S. averaged more than 3,330 deaths daily during this period.

The number of new daily infections in the current wave appears to have hit a high in the past week and has been steadily declining in most states since according to researchers. Ali Mokdad of the University of Washington thinks that we have peaked in the number of new cases. Researchers believe that declines in daily deaths could soon follow.

Caitlin Rivers of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, said that based on current trends, the worst seems to be over. Community transmission remains high in most states. After seeing 200,000 or more confirmed cases per day for most of December and early January, the U.S. reached a peak seven day average of just over 249,000 on January 11 according to Johns Hopkins University. New cases have dropped steadily since then but are still close to 200,000 a day on average.

Vaccine Administration

Operation Warp Speed was a great success in supporting the development and manufacture of millions of doses of coronavirus vaccine from multiple companies in a short time. However, the project did not include support for administering the vaccine to people at the state level. The administration's approach was to furnish states with the vaccines but let the states be

responsible for administering the vaccine. Without strong federal support, the states are not going to be able to establish a program to vaccinate the number of people needed to achieve herd immunity within months.

States need to establish the order in which various groups receive the vaccine, register people to receive a vaccination, establish vaccination sites, hire staff to administer the vaccine, manage the administration of the vaccine, promote the vaccination program, and provide funding for vaccine related supplies and equipment.

Many states will need support to build the workforce required to administer thousands of shots every day. West Virginia is using the Army National Guard to administer the vaccine in their state. CVS and Walgreens are participating in a program in many states to administer the vaccine in long-term care facilities. This should help control the spread of the virus in these facilities which have suffered 40% of the deaths due to coronavirus.

The Trump administration promised that 20 million people would be vaccinated by the end of 2020. As of January 20, 2021, at least 14.3 million people have received at least one dose of the vaccine and 36 million doses have been distributed. Without a significant speedup in vaccinations, it will take years, not months to vaccinate enough people in the U.S. to achieve herd immunity. President Joe Biden has promised to deliver 100 million vaccine shots in 100 days.

American Relief Plan

The President announced a \$1.9 trillion emergency relief plan called the American Relief Plan on Thursday, January 14. He described it as a package of emergency measures to meet the nation's immediate economic and health care needs, to be followed in February by a broader relief plan. The plan builds on the \$4 trillion Congress has already devoted to addressing the pandemic, which includes a \$900 billion measure that President Trump signed in December.

It is divided into three major areas: \$400 billion for provisions to fight coronavirus with more vaccines and testing, more than \$1 trillion in direct relief to families, including stimulus payments and increased unemployment insurance benefits; and \$440 billion for aid to communities and businesses, including \$350 billion in emergency funding to state, local and tribal governments.

The plan includes \$20 billion to support a universal vaccination program, as well as \$50 billion for a massive expansion of testing and \$130 billion to help schools reopen safely. It supports his goal to deliver 100 million vaccine shots in 100 days, and re-open a majority of K-12 public schools in that same time frame.

It increases the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour and adds billions in funding for childcare.

The President calls for increasing federal unemployment benefits from \$300 to \$400 per week and extends those benefits through September, preventing millions of people from losing their jobless aid in March.

The President's proposal would increase stimulus payments from \$600 to \$2,000 per person and expand eligibility for stimulus payments to families where one parent is an immigrant, as well as to adult children claimed as dependents on their parents' tax return.

The plan includes a major expansion of tax credits for children and lower-income workers. It would expand a tax credit for children under 6 years of age to \$3,600 per child and to \$3,000 a year for children under 17. It would also extend eligibility for the credit to millions of poor families who currently are not eligible. It would also expand the Earned Income Tax Credit, a tax benefit to workers, from \$530 to \$1,500, while expanding eligibility for that program.

The President's plan also includes initiatives to help the economy recover including a combined 14 weeks of paid sick and family medical leave for millions of workers and grants to more than 1 million small businesses and \$35 million for low-interest loans for clean energy investments.

The President's plan would put tens of billions of dollars into other needs facing the country, from food and water assistance, food stamps, and funding for U.S. territories such as Puerto Rico.

MD General Assembly Reconvenes

The MD General Assembly convened for its 442nd session on January 13, 2021.

Democrats who hold supermajorities in both houses, intend to override some of the 22 bills Hogan vetoed in May. The top veto override target is reinstating a sweeping overhaul of public schools and legislation requiring new taxes to pay for it.

Governor Larry Hogan unveiled a \$1 billion stimulus and tax relief package aimed at easing the economic toll of the coronavirus pandemic. The RELIEF Act includes a total of \$267 million in direct payments to Maryland residents who qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit. Families who qualify would receive an additional \$750 and individuals will receive \$450. Hogan said about 400,000 low-income Maryland residents would qualify for the direct payments.

In addition, the package includes \$180 million in targeted tax relief for Maryland residents who have lost their jobs by repealing all state and local income taxes on unemployment benefits. The measure also provides \$300 million in immediate tax relief to restaurants and small businesses by allowing them to keep up to \$12,000 of sales tax over the next four months.

Hogan said the measure will be introduced as emergency legislation when the MD General Assembly convened and called on lawmakers to immediately pass the measure.

Democratic legislators are developing their own relief package. Their priorities include ideas to stave off an eviction crisis, bolster the state unemployment system strained by a record number of unemployment claims, funnel money to restaurants and small businesses threatened by bankruptcy and reward private companies that keep employees on telework for months to come.

There is no consensus on a relief package between the Governor and the Democratic legislators.

Raise for Federal Employees

President Trump signed an executive order on New Year's Eve implementing a 1 percent pay raise for federal civilian employees in 2021. The raise takes effect with the first full pay period in January and contains no locality pay adjustments.

2021 Medicare Part B Premiums

In 2021, the total cost of the monthly Part B standard premium is increasing from \$144.60 to \$148.50. This is a 2.7 percent increase from 2020 to 2021. In addition, the 2021 deductible for Medicare Part B is increasing from \$198 to \$203.

Renewal of NARFE Membership

When you renew your NARFE membership, please check to make sure that they renew both your NARFE national and your chapter membership. The new fee is \$48/yr for NARFE national and \$8 for chapter membership for a total of \$56/yr. for those renewing their membership. If you discover a problem, please call NARFE headquarters at 800-456-8410 to request a correction.

New Federation President

Dr. Sudha Haley became our new MD Federation President on January 1, 2021 replacing Dr. Gary Roundtree who became the new Region II Vice President. Mr. Larry Walton became the new 1st Vice President replacing Dr. Haley. Dr. Haley will address us at our February 18 General Meeting.

WEP/GPO Repeal Bill

On January 4, Rep. Rodney Davis, R-IL, reintroduced the latest iteration of legislation to repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO). These provisions cut the earned Social Security benefits of federal retirees and their surviving spouses. The Social Security Fairness Act of 2021, H.R. 82, would fully repeal both provisions, which, together, affect over 2.5 million people nationwide. Visit NARFE's Legislative Action Center to urge your Representative to cosponsor this important legislation.

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR - Lillie Watson

Chapter Activity Report 11/1/2020-12/15/2020

- 498 Chapter 1747 Members as of 1/19/21
- 02 New Chapter Members - Peggie Brown, John Fedkenheuer
- 09 Members Dropped for Non-Renewal
- 04 Members Passed Away - Marie S. Locke, Ruth A. Kluth, Virginia M. Dorn, Patricia M. Smith
- 00 Members Sent Second Notice

TREASURER REPORT - Vanessa Washington

Balance on: Nov 30, 2020	\$9,787.25
Income:	\$499.53
Expenses:	\$292.30
Balance on: Dec 31, 2020	\$9,994.48
Reserve for Alzheimer's Fund	\$302.00

CHAPTER 1747 OFFICERS

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