

BEEHIVE CHIMES

Newsletter of

UTAH FEDERATION OF CHAPTERS

Isabel Sullivan, Editor

NOVEMBER 2018

Website: Narfe.org/site/UT

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It's that time of year again !! Open season for the Federal Employee Health Benefit Plans, when we have the chance to compare the Health Plans and decide which one meets our individual needs as active employees and annuitants. The active federal employee is still looking for the 1.9% raise the House approved, but at this writing the Senate has yet to follow through. However, a COLA of 2.8% has been announced, which may give some of us a little extra to help pay for the modest increase in some of the health plan premiums. The premium for Medicare part B is one of the modest increases at \$135, which is affordable for most of us. Please read your November issue of NARFE Magazine for a listing of the available health plans and their premiums.

November is going to be a busy month, having local elections plus elections for state representatives and senators. We who are active federal employees, retirees and annuitants have a responsibility to do our homework. We should vote for those who, regardless of which political party affiliation they claim, are prepared to continue the fight against efforts to cut our earned benefits in order to lower the deficit.After all, we are in no way responsible for causing said deficit!.

Hope you all have a happy and safe Halloween !

Marla Ramey, Utah Federation President
marlaramey54@gmail.com.

LEGISLATION

Message from NARFE President Richard G. Thissen:

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (October 11, 2018) - The cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) annuities and Social Security benefits will be 2.8 percent in 2019, but only 2 percent for Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) retirees, pursuant to federal law and the latest consumer price data released this morning by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Richard Thissen, president of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE), issued the following statement in response:

"CSRS retirees and Social Security recipients will be pleased to see their benefits increase by 2.8 percent in 2019, the largest increase since 2012. Unfortunately, hundreds of thousands of FERS retirees will be wondering why they are only receiving a 2 percent COLA when the relevant measure of consumer prices increased by 2.8 percent. That's due to the bargain struck in Congress in the 1980s when FERS was created, which limits COLAs to 2 percent when consumer prices increase between 2 and 3 percent. But that was the wrong policy then, as it is now. It prevents FERS annuities from keeping up with inflation, which is the whole point of a COLA. It is past time for Congress to ensure FERS retirees receive a full COLA each year..."

+ + [Get Reimbursed for Your Medicare Part B Premiums](#)

In 2018, a number of FEHB plans, including Aetna Direct and BlueCross Blue Shield, are offering plans that include at least partial premium reimbursement for retirees who are enrolled in Medicare Part B. Below are some FEHB Plans Offering Reimbursement

Aetna Direct, members can request reimbursement for Medicare premiums that will be reduced from the Medical fund amount.

BlueCross Blue Shield PPO – Basic Option – Limited HRA is provided to any member enrolled in Medicare Part A and Part B; reimbursement is to be used exclusively to pay Medicare Part B premiums – \$600 annually. (New) Aetna HealthFund HDHP – reimburse Medicare premiums using HRA funds. Aetna Health of Utah HDHP – reimburse Medicare premiums using HRA funds..

- GEHA HDHP – reimburse Medicare premiums using HRA funds..
- MHPB Consumer Option – reimburse Medicare premiums using HRA funds.
- United Healthcare Insurance Choice Plus HDHP – reimburse Medicare premiums using HRA funds. + + As a reminder; update your **wellness card** to receive the benefits it provides
*If you have questions on these two items, call the number on the back of your insurance card.

+ + **On October 5, Dr. Jeff Pon abruptly resigned** from his Senate-confirmed post as Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). The same day, the White House appointed Margaret Weichert to the position of Acting Director of OPM. In a [statement](#), the White House claimed Weichert will take on the new OPM responsibilities in addition to her current duties as the Deputy Director for Management with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). In this position, Weichert is involved in the administration's efforts to reshape the civil service and transform the role of OPM.

+ + **Legislation Creating Process for Government Reorganization Advances**
Following release of a plan to privatize the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) and move federal benefits programs out of OPM, NARFE members should [contact](#) their legislators and voice their unease with the [administration's government reorganization plan](#). On September 26, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee approved the Reforming Government Act of 2018, [3137](#), and unanimously advanced a modified version of the legislation to the full Senate chamber. S. 3137 would create a procedure for the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to submit a formal government reorganization plan to Congress for consideration and a vote. The legislation would provide OMB two years to submit a formal reorganization plan to Congress that would accomplish cost savings or decrease the number of federal agencies.

+ + **Voting Scorecard of the 115th Congress (2017-2018)**
Check out this link, Page 12 of the document: [How They Voted](#)

+ + **Make Your Voice Heard in Congress**
NARFE members are encouraged to use the [NARFE Legislative Action Center](#) to quickly and easily send letters to members of Congress on a variety of NARFE issues, sign up for action alerts and track NARFE-related bills and votes.

SILENCE IS ACCEPTANCE.....

+ + **Follow the Bill Tracker in your NARFE magazine, Page 11.**

Nancy Carlson-Gotts, Vice President,
Legislation

NEWS FROM CHAPTERS

SALT LAKE #0155: What another great annual meeting with our insurance representatives from Aetna, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, GEHA, and Mailhandlers. As always, a good Q&A session; depending on your plan, some premiums went down or stayed the same as 2018. Questions on dental coverage, the MRA, wellness card, and more.

Reminder: per our bylaw change, there is **no meeting in November**. Our December meeting will be our

annual meeting/luncheon at Anna's Restaurant (4770 S 900 E), December 18 at noon. Write a check, **by Dec 13, for \$10/meal** to NARFE and mail to Nancy Carlson-Gotts, 3500 S. Millcreek Canyon Road, SLC, UT 84109, specify your choice of turkey or roast beef. Call me at 801-502-2167 if questions. Bring toiletries and/or nonperishable items for donations to The INN Between.

Nancy Carlson-Gotts, President 801 502 2167

LAYTON # 829: We had 37 members and guest present. President Crawford told us about the importance of voting this year. He also, reminded us about legislative issues that were addressed in our September NARFE Magazine. He passed out a copy of the report on our states congressional voting records.

Our guest speakers from the Federal Health Benefits program were: Kimberly Sparks, BCBS; Brad Hansen, Aetna Direct; and Sherril Merrill from GEHA. The good news is that premium costs have not increased very much. Some benefits have been improved and some reduced. YOU NEEDED TO BE THERE!

Our next regular meeting will be at the Layton Library at 1 P. M. November 14, 2018. Heather Frenin will be speaking about Diabetes symptoms, prevention and maintenance!

If you have any questions, please feel free to call President David Crawford at (801) 825-4254 or Sec. Treasurer Joan Turner at (801) 475-7143.

Joan L. Turner, Secretary/

ALZHEIMER'S DONATIONS: from Utah Federation NARFE members should be sent by check payable to "NARFE Alzheimer's Research." Be sure your chapter number is on the check, (or your NARFE number if you are not a member of a chapter). Mail to: John Light, Utah Federation Alzheimer's Chair, 3769 South 3325 West, West Valley City, UT 84119-3509.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE: This is a reminder of our 2018 Recruiting Drive now underway: For every new member recruited September 1 through December 31, 2018, recruiters will receive \$10 (the recruiter's ID number must be provided when the new member joins.

Recruiters also will be entered once for each recruit for a monthly drawing of a \$25 Amazon Gift Card and for the Grand Prize Drawing for a brand new Boss SoundLink Revolve + Bluetooth 360 Speaker!

Updated brochures and materials are available to support the field in recruiting efforts. The NNARFE membership brochure, F-135 is available to order. The brochure can help you through talking points and includes an application with a prepaid return envelope.

Complete rules and information can be found online at www.narfe.org/recruit.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR UTAH'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

**Sen. Orrin Hatch, Washington, D.C. Office: 202-224-5251; Salt Lake City Office: 801-524-4380
Address: 8402 Federal Bldg., 125 S. State St., Salt Lake City, UT 84138**

**Sen. Mike Lee, Washington, D.C. Office: 202-224-5444; Salt Lake City: 801-224-5933
Address: Wallace F. Bennett Fed. Bldg., Suite 4225, 125 S. State St., Salt Lake City, UT 84138**

**Rep. Rob Bishop (District 1), Washington, D.C. Office: 202-225-0453; Ogden Office 801-625-0107
Address: 101 Federal Building, 324 25th Street, Ogden, UT 84401**

Rep. Chris Stewart (District 2) Washington, D.C. Office: 2022259730; Salt Lake City Office: 420 E. South Temple, #390, SLC, UT 84113, Phone 801-364-5550; St. George Distr. Office: 254 W St. George Blvd., Suite 100, St. George, UT 84777, Phone 435-627-1500

Rep. Rep. John Curtis (District 3), Washington, D.C. Office: Phone 202-225-7751; 2236 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, DC 20515; Provo Phone (801) 851-2500; Address: 51 S. University Ave., Suite 318, Provo, UT 84601

Rep Mia Love (District 4), Washington, D.C. Office: 202=225-3011; West Jordan Office: 801-996-8729; Address: 9067 S. 1300 West, West Jordan, UT 84088