



# LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES at the INDIVIDUAL LEVEL TOOLKIT

## **In this toolkit, you will...**

Learn how to participate in legislative activities on your own. This guide explains how to contact your members of Congress and effectively convey your message, and engage with them in person and on social media.



**National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association**



## Calling Your Members of Congress

*Follow the instructions below to call your members of Congress and spread the NARFE message. Calling your representative and two senators shows that NARFE members pay attention to the issues and want their voice heard.*

### **Sample Call-in Script**

#### **Step #1: Dial NARFE's toll-free number for the Capitol: 1-866-220-0044**

Ask the operator to connect you to your representative's and/or senators' office. Alternatively, you can find the direct number for your representative and senators through their website on <http://www.house.gov> and <http://www.senate.gov>, respectively.

#### **Step #2: Tell the staff person who answers the telephone your name and where you live so they know you are a constituent, then say:**

"I am a retired/active federal employee and member of NARFE." [In 1 -2 sentences, tell the staff person a little about your work as a federal employee.]

"[Senator or Representative X] represents thousands of postal workers and retirees and their survivors, who shouldn't be forced to pay for duplicative Medicare coverage in order to keep their federal health insurance. That was never part of the agreement made upon employment, and it should not be forced on any postal retiree retroactively. This would set a dangerous precedent regarding benefits for all federal retirees.

"I respectfully request that you oppose, or work to amend, the Postal Service Reform Act of 2017, H.R. 756."

#### **Step #3: Thank the staff member for listening and request a written response.**

#### **Step #4: Repeat steps 1-3 until you have called your representative and both senators.**

Make sure to contact only your members of Congress. Lawmakers will disregard your message if you are not a constituent.



## **Attending Congressional Town Hall Events**

*Attending town hall or tele-town hall events held by members of Congress and posing a question is a great way to raise awareness of, and put a local face on, federal retirees and federal workforce issues.*

### **What Are Town Halls?**

Members of Congress hold town halls in their home states to connect with constituents, share legislative updates and take questions.

Traditionally, these town halls are held in community centers, churches, libraries and other public spaces. However, members of Congress increasingly are relying on telephone conference services to hold “tele-town halls,” in which constituents listen and participate from home over their phones. To find out when tele-town halls are scheduled, call or email your senators and representative and request to be put on their tele-town hall list. This will ensure you will be included each time one is held.

### **When Are Town Halls Held?**

Typically, town halls are held during congressional recess periods. Consult the 2017 Congressional Recess Calendar for exact dates:

House: [https://www.majorityleader.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/2017\\_ANNUAL\\_CALENDAR.pdf](https://www.majorityleader.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/2017_ANNUAL_CALENDAR.pdf)

Senate: [https://www.senate.gov/legislative/resources/pdf/2017\\_calendar.pdf](https://www.senate.gov/legislative/resources/pdf/2017_calendar.pdf)

Every member of Congress keeps his or her own schedule. You can contact the district or state office for your representative and senators and ask if any town halls are scheduled. You also can sign up for your legislator’s newsletter on their website.

### **What You Can Do**

Attend a town hall and speak up! Be sure to wear your NARFE T-shirt or button.

Once a town hall or tele-town hall event is confirmed, team up with your local NARFE chapter members to attend. Greater numbers increase the likelihood your voices will be heard.

Come armed with facts and questions for your senators or representative. Below are some samples you can use.



### **Sample Town Hall Questions**

- *The Postal Service Reform Act of 2017, H.R. 756, unfairly burdens 76,000 current postal retirees and their survivors by changing the bargain regarding their health benefits in retirement. Will you work to ensure current retirees living on fixed incomes won't be unfairly targeted?*
- *I retired after \_\_\_ years with the federal government. As a retiree who has been promised benefits after my years of public service, I'm afraid of threats I've been hearing to cut my earned benefits. Please keep federal employees and retirees in mind when you vote on and cosponsor legislation. [If they have been supportive, add: Thank you for your past support of federal employees and retirees.]*
- *Some in Congress are calling for drastic cuts to the federal workforce. I am a former [profession] in charge of [task]. How will you explain to me and your other voters why American taxpayers are going to get less of [service]?*

### **Following the Town Hall, Tell Us You Attended**

Fill out the “Congressional Meeting or Event Feedback Form” in the Legislative Action Center to tell us about your town hall. This information is important in our continued communications with members of Congress.



## **Representing NARFE at Community Events**

*NARFE members are active participants in their communities, and this activism is an opportunity to talk about NARFE's legislative agenda with legislators. For some members of Congress, hearing about NARFE's concerns outside of the NARFE meeting will amplify the message. Here are some ways that you can get involved in your community as an individual while sharing NARFE's message.*

### **Community or County Carnivals/Fairs**

Attend community events, such as the county fair, wearing your NARFE gear to gain free publicity for the organization. Often, elected officials will attend these events to mingle with constituents. If the local political party has a booth, the member of Congress may be stationed there. Speaking to the elected official for a few moments at these events is an excellent opportunity.

Keep your comments short and to the point. For example: "Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a constituent. I retired after \_\_\_ years with the federal government. As a retiree who has been promised benefits after my years of public service, I'm afraid of threats I've been hearing to cut my earned benefits. Please keep federal employees and retirees in mind when you vote on and cosponsor legislation. [If they have been supportive, add: Thank you for your past support of federal employees and retirees.]"

Because the member of Congress does not usually have a staff member there, or a place for storage, these are not ideal times to bring materials for the member of Congress to take and study. However, take a business card or ask for the scheduler's information and contact the scheduler for a follow-up meeting. Or drop by the office with materials the next business day and leave a note reminding the elected official where you met him or her.

### **Parades**

Similar to community carnivals or county fairs, local parades are an excellent opportunity to meet with legislators who are out and about in their community. You often can find legislators mingling at the end of the parade route. You can stake out that area and speak with your member of Congress briefly. Also, wear your NARFE gear so that legislators see it as they walk along the parade route. Often, communities have street fairs following parades, so this is another opportunity to meet legislators.



### **Other Community Organization Events**

If you are member of another organization or active in your local political party, these can be opportunities to speak to legislators or others about NARFE's issues. While other organizations may not work on federal employee and retiree issues, they may be concerned about cuts to workers' earned pay and benefits, or the degradation of government functions and services, such as timely mail delivery by the postal service. Your local political parties may host events – especially in the summer – that give you an opportunity to approach your member of Congress.

If you are attending another organization's event, please keep in mind that it is not a NARFE event. Make every effort to be courteous.

### **Show Your NARFE Pride**

Whether attending or volunteering at a community event, wear your NARFE gear to show you are proud to be a federal employee or retiree! Wear your hats, T-shirts and buttons!

### **Following the Event, Tell Us You Attended**

Fill out the "Congressional Meeting or Event Feedback Form" in the Legislative Action Center to tell us about your town hall. This information is important in our continued communications with members of Congress.



## Facebook Advocacy Guide

### What is Facebook and why are we using it?

Facebook is a social networking website that allows users to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what's going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them.

The NARFE Headquarters Facebook page is a place where you can get up-to-date information on NARFE's activities throughout the year. Through Facebook, we can promote our advocacy activities to members and supporters, and spread our message to elected officials.



It's easy and quick to share your advocacy efforts on Facebook. Use the ideas below to post information about events and meetings with elected officials on your own Facebook page.

### Follow NARFE on Facebook

Go to [www.facebook.com/NARFEHQ](http://www.facebook.com/NARFEHQ) and click "Like" to follow NARFE on Facebook.

Don't forget to like and share our posts on your individual Facebook page or your chapter's Facebook page to help spread our message.

### Sharing your story

Sharing your story about the great work and community involvement of active and retired federal workers is a great way to show the public all the ways federal employees protect America's heartbeat every day. Remember to post a photo along with your story if you can. Go to <http://www.facebook.com/NARFEHQ> for examples.

To submit your story:

- First, find the post box on your Facebook page and select which type of post you are submitting (text, photo, or video). In the post box, type your story of how you're representing NARFE to protect the earned pay and benefits of federal employees and retirees.





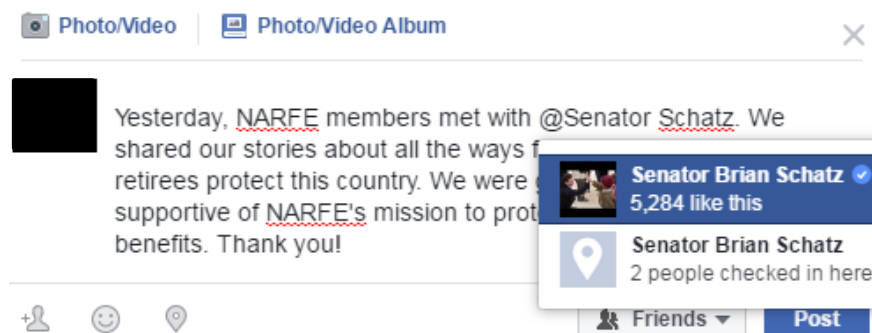
- When you are happy with your story, remember to tag the NARFE Headquarters Facebook page in the post so we can see your story.
  - To tag the NARFE Headquarters Facebook page in your post, simply add “@NARFEHQ” to the end of your post and select the NARFE Headquarters Facebook page.



- When you have completed your post, click “Share” and your post will be added to your Facebook timeline.

### **Posting about meetings and events**

- Are you attending a meeting with an elected official? Before you get there, decide who will take photos during the event and post on Facebook after the event.
- Find your elected official’s Facebook page so you can mention and tag him/her in your posts about the event or meeting.
- In your post, report back about your favorite moment from the event or meeting. Below is a sample post that you can customize:
  - *Last week we attended a meeting with [elected official’s name]! We shared our stories about all the ways federal employees and retirees protect America. [Insert your favorite part of the event here]*
- Remember also to thank the elected officials you met with by posting a thank you on his/her Facebook wall.
- You can also post updates about events you attend with your legislators – just be sure to tag them!







## How to Send a Letter to Members of Congress Using the NARFE Legislative Action Center

*NARFE's Legislative Action Center, available on the NARFE website, makes it quick and easy to send a letter to your members of Congress on NARFE issues. Sending letters via this system is an important way to share your personal story and ensure your voice is heard. To send letters to your members of Congress, follow the steps below.*

- 1) First, go to the NARFE home page, [www.narfe.org](http://www.narfe.org) and click on "Legislation" in the top left-hand corner to be directed to NARFE's Legislation home page. Once on the Legislation page, click on the "Legislative Action Center" image of the Capitol, right under the "Latest NARFE News" section.

The screenshot shows the NARFE website with the following elements:

- Header:** NARFE logo, tagline "Protecting the Future for ACTIVE AND RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES", and "National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association".
- Navigation Bar:** Home, MEMBER LOG IN, Join NARFE, About NARFE, Contact Us.
- Left Sidebar:**
  - PRESS ROOM
  - DONATE TO NARFE PROGRAMS
  - LEGISLATION** (highlighted with a red circle)
    - Take Action (circled in red)
    - Top Issues
    - Weekly Hotline Update
    - NARFE-PAC
    - Congressional Testimony
    - Letters to Congress
    - Legislative Training Conference
    - Contact NARFE's Legislative Department
  - FIND NARFE ON FACEBOOK (Follow @NARFEHQ)
- Main Content Area:**
  - Latest NARFE News** section with links: Postal Reform Bill | Hiring Freeze | 2017 Pay Raise | Hold Harmless Bill Introduced | Long-Term Care hearing | Alzheimer's Fundraising Goal | 2017 Medicare Premiums | Archived Releases.
  - Article: **NARFE Urges Opposition to House Postal Reform Bill** with a "Read More" link.
  - A large red arrow pointing down to a blue box with the text **LEGISLATIVE ACTION CENTER**.
  - Text below the box: "The Legislative Action Center (LAC) is NARFE's easy way to send letters to your members of Congress, search for your legislators, report your congressional meetings, and much more!"
  - Footer banner for **NARFE 2017 LEGISLATIVE TRAINING CONFERENCE** (March 12-15, 2017 | Alexandria, VA) with a Capitol dome icon.



When you enter the Legislative Action Center (LAC) (<http://www.narfe.org/legislation/votervoice.cfm>), you will notice things look very different and many new features are available. For now, we're going to focus on how to send a letter. To see the full list of letters, click on "advocacy campaigns" under "Actions." The number will change as legislation is introduced and more action letters are added.

2) Once on the "active issues" page, you will notice that the action letters are listed. Click on the action letter you would like to send.





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Action Alert

Threats Facing the Federal Community

Threats facing the federal community have never been greater, now that the new administration and new Congress have settled in. Previous unsuccessful proposals to reduce the earned pay and benefits of the federal community are likely to be used as blueprints for the next... [+] more

Compose Your Message

Recipients

- Senator Mark Warner
- Senator Tim Kaine
- Representative Don Beyer Jr.

Message

Subject

Protect the Federal Community

Body

As a constituent and member of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE), I am keenly aware of the arbitrary and disproportionate sacrifices that have been forced on the federal community throughout the past several years. Now, the 115th Congress and the new administration have plans that could inflict further harm on the financial well-being of civil servants and retirees. I ask that you protect those who have proudly served their nation and stand by the promises made to them.

Budget negotiations will begin in the coming months, and once again, the federal community will be placed in the crosshairs. Since 2010, federal employees have contributed

Remaining: 8,300

Customize Your Signature (optional)

Molly Checksfield

Your Information

Prefix

First Name

Last Name

Suffix

Ms.

Molly

Checksfield

Email

mchecksfield@narfe.org

Home Information

Street Address

606 N Washington St

City

Alexandria

State

VA

ZIP Code

22314

☒ I want to receive future email alerts
 ☒ Remember me (Uncheck on shared computers)

Send Message

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Share with Friends

Social Media

Email

Web

Click on a social media button to share this campaign with your friends.

Share on Facebook

Share on Twitter

Share on LinkedIn

3) Once you click on the letter you want to send, you will be brought to a screen where you can read and edit the letter. Sharing your personal story or mentioning something about your district or state is strongly recommended. Congressional offices are more likely to respond to your letter if they can tell that you took the time to write a thoughtful, personalized letter.

4) When you scroll down, you will be able to enter your contact information on the bottom of the page, right below the letter. Your information is crucial to sending the correct legislator your letter.

5) After you finish writing your letter, click “Send Message” to transmit the letter.

6) Congratulations! You have sent a letter to your member of Congress via the new NARFE Legislative Action Center! You will now see a confirmation page that shows which members of Congress received your letter. You also will receive an email from NARFE thanking you for taking action.

7) You can share the letter on social media if you have a Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn account.

8) To find another letter you would like to send, click on the LAC banner at the top of the page to see the full list of draft letters, then return to step 2.