



VFN National Legislative Program

Update & Challenges

November 20, 2024

Gaston Gianni

VFN National Legislative Chair

OVERVIEW



- **VFN Advocacy Mission**
- **VFN National Legislation Team**
- **VA Congressional Delegation—118th Congress**
- **VFN Team Members**
- **A Look at Individual Congressional Districts- Present & Future**
- **SLL & CDL Building Relationships**
- **Legislative Positions & Priorities—118th Congress**
- **NARFE ADVOCACY COMMITTEE REPORT FOR 119th Congress**
- **VA Congressional Delegation—119th Congress**
- **Grassroots Advocacy**
- **NARFE PAC—How Does it Work?**
- **2023-2024 PAC Funds –Collections & Distributions**
- **ADVOCACY HELP**
- **TAKE AWAY POINTS**
- **Questions**

VFN ADVOCACY MISSION



- 1. NARFE Advocacy in Virginia**
- 2. Build Congressional Relationships**
- 3. Build NARFE Area VP Relationships**
- 4. Build Relationship with Chapters and Chapter National Legislative Chairs**
- 5. Encourage NARFE Members to contact Congressional Representatives**
- 6. Assist with NARFE Political Action Funds (PAC) contribution decisions**



- ▶ **Chair (Sits on the VFN Board)**
- ▶ **2 Senatorial Leaders (SLs)**
- ▶ **11 Congressional District Leaders (CDL)
(One for each of Virginia's 11
Congressional Districts)**

VA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION—118th



- **Sen Mark Warner(D)**
- **Sen Tim Kane (D)**
- **1st Rob Wittman (R)**
- **2nd Jen Kiggans (R)**
- **3rd Bobby Scott (D)**
- **4th Jennifer McClellan (D)**
- **5th Robert Good (R)**
- **6th Ben Cline (R)**
- **7th Abigail Spanberger (D)**
- **8th Don Beyer (D)**
- **9th Morgan Griffith (R)**
- **10th Jennifer Wexton (D)**
- **11th Gerry Connolly (D)**

- **8 Democrats, 5 Republicans**

VFN National Legislative Team 118th Congress



- ▶ SLL Charles Kawecky, Shenandoah 2358—Sen. Mark Warner
- ▶ SLL Eddie Eitches, McLean Great Falls 0489—Sen. Tim Kaine

- ▶ 1st CDL—Marilyn Riddle, Williamsburg 0685--Rep. Rob Wittman
- ▶ 2nd CDL—Ray Orland, Suffolk 1743--Rep Jen Kiggans
- ▶ 3rd CDL -Maggie Keator, Peninsula 0682--Rep. Bobby Scott
- ▶ 4th CDL -Debbie Fisk, Midlothian 2265--Rep. Jennifer McClellan
- ▶ 5th CDL -Joanne Hirsch, Charlottesville 0135—Rep. Bob Good
- ▶ 6th CDL -Dr. Leon Vinci, Roanoke 0111--Rep. Ben Cline
- ▶ 7th CDL -Bob Martin, Fredericksburg 0090—Rep. Abigail Spanberger
- ▶ 8th CDL--Thomas Hart, Fairfax 0737--Rep. Don Beyer
- ▶ 9th CDL—Frances Boatman, Roanoke 0111--Rep. Morgan Griffith
- ▶ 10th CDL- Dennis Freeman, Fairfax 0737—Rep. Jenifer Wexton
- ▶ 11th CDL -Judy Thorne, Dulles 1241—Rep. Gerald Connolly

- ▶ NLC Chair—Gaston Gianni, Woodbridge 1270



- **SENATOR MARK WARNER**
- **Senatorial Leader—Charles Kaweckic**

- **SENATOR TIM KAINE**
- **Senatorial Leader---Eddie Eitches**

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 1

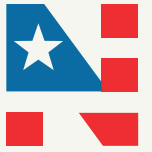


- **CONGRESSMAN—Rob Wittman (R)**
- **CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT LEADER—Marilyn Riddle**

- **CHAPTERS**
 - a. 1757 Middle Peninsula –AREA I
 - b. 1823 Northern Neck—AREA I
 - c. 0685 Williamsburg—AREA I
 - d. 2265 Midlothian—AREA 3

- **AREA I VP—Marilyn Riddle**
- **AREA 3 VP --Wynn Hasty**

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 2



- **CONGRESSWOMAN—Jen Kiggans (R)**
- **CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT LEADER—Ray Orland**

- **CHAPTERS**
 - a. 0005 VA Beach (Metro) --AREA II
 - b. 0974 VA Beach (Bayside)-- AREA II
 - c. 1827 Seaside (VA Beach) --AREA II
 - d. 1697 Brentwood –AREA IV

- **Area II VP—Betty Warren**
- **Area IV VP—Graylin Taylor**

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 3



- **CONGRESSMAN—Bobby Scott (D)**
- **CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT LEADER— Maggie Keator**

- **CHAPTERS**
 - a. 0682 Peninsula—AREA I
 - b. 0066 Tidewater—AREA II
 - c. 1293 Churchland/Portsmouth—AREA III
 - d. 1743 Suffolk—AREA IV

- **AREA I VP—Marilyn Riddle**
- **AREA II VP--- Betty Warren**
- **AREA IV VP---Graylin Taylor**

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 4



- **CONGRESSWOMAN—Jennifer McClellan (D)**
- **CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT LEADER—Deborah Fisk**
- **CHAPTERS**
 - a. 0028 Petersburg—AREA IV
 - b. 0060 Richmond—AREA IV
 - c. 1727 Tuckahoe—AREA IV

AREA III VP—Wynn Hasty

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 5

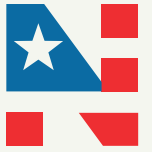


- **CONGRESSMAN-- Robert Good (R)—118th**
John McGuire III (R)119th
- **CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT LEADER—Joanne Hirsch**
- **CHAPTERS**
 - a. 2065 Louisa—AREA III
 - b. 2080 Piedmont—AREA III
 - c. 0135 Charlottesville/Albermarle—AREA VII

AREA III VP—Wynn Hasty

AREA VII VP— Ruth Green

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 6



- **CONGRESSMAN Ben Cline (R)**
- **CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT LEADER—Dr. Leon Vinci**
- **CHAPTERS**
 - a. **0111 Roanoke Valley**
 - b. **0164 Harrisonburg**
 - c. **0180 Winchester**
 - d. **1793 Page Valley/Luray**
 - e. **2358 Shenandoah County**

AREA VII VP—Ruth Green

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 7



- **CONGRESSWOMAN Abigail Spanberger (D) 118th**
- **CONGRESSMAN Eugene Vindman (D) 119th**
- **CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT LEADER---Bob Martin**
- **CHAPTERS**
 - a. 0090 Fredericksburg—AREA VIII
 - b. 0595 Colonial Beach--- AREA VIII
 - c. 2112 Caroline—AREA VIII
 - d. 1270 Woodbridge---AREA IX

AREA VII VP—**VACANT**

AREA IX VP---Carol Campbell

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 8

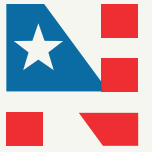


- **CONGRESSMAN Don Beyer (D)**
- **CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT LEADER—Thomas Hart**
- **CHAPTERS**
 - a. 0893 Springfield—AREA IX
 - b. 0007 Arlington---AREA X
 - c. 1665 Metro Northern VA—AREA X

AREA IX VP--- Carol Campbell

AREA X VP---Ted Pasek

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 9



- **CONGRESSMAN Morgan Griffith (R)**
- **CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT LEADER—Frances Boatman**
- **CHAPTERS**
 - a. 0111 Roanoke Valley

AREA VII VP—Ruth Green

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 10



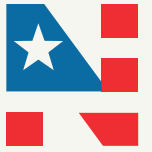
- **CONGRESSWOMAN Jennifer Wexton (D) 118th**
- **CONGRESSMAN Suhas Subramanyam (D) 119th**
- **CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT LEADER—Dennis Freeman**
- **CHAPTERS**
 - a. 1549 Fauquier— Area VII
 - b. 0356 Manassas—Area IX
 - c. 1241 Dullas—Area X

AREA VII VP—VACANT

AREA IX VP---Carol Campbell

AREA X VP--- Ted Pasek

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 11



- **CONGRESSMAN GERALD CONNOLLY (D)**
- **CONGRSSIONAL DISTRICT LEADER—*Judy Thorne***
- **CHAPTERS**
 - 0893 Springfield—Area IX
 - 1159 Annandale—Area IX
 - 0489 McLean/Great Falls—Area X
 - 1241 Dulles—Area X
- **AREA IX VP—Carol Campbell**
- **AREA X VP—Ted Pasek**



▶ Congressional

- NARFE Focal Contact Person
- Get to Know Staff–In District & Washington Offices
- Meet the Senator and Congressional Representative
- Inform of NARFE Top Issues

▶ VFN AVPs

- Keep in the Communication Loop
- Identify chapters in Congressional District

▶ Chapters and Chapter Legislative Chairs

- Establish contact with Chapters in District
- Encourage members to contact Congressional Reps.



- **Retirement issues**
- **Social Security**
- **Pay and Workforce Policies**
- **Health Care—FHEB and Medicare, and Long-Term Care**
- **Advocacy Positions for the 119th Congress have been approved by NARFE Executive Borad**



Overview

- **Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP)/ Government Pension Offset (GPO) Repeal or Reform**
- **More Accurate COLAs For FERS Retirees**
- **Federal Pay Increase**
- **Improving Government and Protecting the Merit System**
- **OPM Customer Service**
- **Protect Earned Retirement and Health Benefits**
- **Improving Medicare Integration with FEHB**



WEP/GPO Repeal or Reform

- Social Security Fairness Act, H.R. 82/S.597

- **329 cosponsors as of 9/15/24**
- **218 Discharge Petition 9/19/24**
- **327 votes to pass 11/12/24!!!**

(VA VOTES--5 yes, 3 no, 3 nonvoting)



- Continue to increase cosponsorship for S. 597---**62 cosponsors in Senate (as of 11/10/24)** VA Senators are co-sponsors



More Accurate COLAs for FERS Retirees

- **Support of the Equal COLA Act, H.R. 866/ S. 3194, ensuring FERS COLAs match the change in consumer prices (and the CSRS COLA)**
 - **79 cosponsors for H.R. 866 as of 11/10/24 (Connolly bill, 3 VA Cosponsors—Spanberger, McClellan, Wexton**
 - **11 cosponsors for S. 3194 as of 11/10/24**
(Sen. Padilla CA Bill, no VA cosponsors)
- **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%



Federal Pay

- **Support market-rate federal pay increases**
 - 5.2% increase for 2024
 - Parity with military pay raise
 - Based on recent changes in private-sector wages and salaries
 - Biden issued alternative pay plan to provide 4.7% across-the-board increase, plus 0.5% increase to locality pay (signed into law 12/23)
- **For 2025, NARFE supports a 4.5 % increase with 4% across- the board increase, plus .05% increase for locality (market-rate)**
- **President Biden FY25 Budget Proposal includes 2% raise**





Improving Government and Protecting the Merit System

- **Support the Saving the Civil Service Act, H.R. 1002/S.399**
 - Would prohibit return of Schedule F, protect merit based civil service (58-cosponsors House; 20 cosponsors Senate)
 - Connolly Bill, Co sponsors-- Spanberger, Wexton, Beyer, McClellan--- Kaine Bill, Warner co-sponsor
- **Support H.R. 159/ S. 59, Chance to Compete Act**
 - Would improve cross-agency hiring, expand the use of subject matter experts in the hiring process, and primarily focus on an individual's relevant experience and skills rather than self-ratings and degrees
 - Passed the House 422-2 (3 cosponsors Senate)
- **Support additional efforts to modernize federal human capital management**



Improving Government & Protecting the Merit System

- **Support OPM Final Rule “Upholding Civil Service Protections and Merit System Principles”**
 - a. **Notice & comment would be required**
 - b. **No loss of competitive service protections if involuntarily reclassified**
 - c. **Appeal rights for employees involuntarily reclassified**
- **OPPOSE Public Service Reform Act H.R. 3115/ S.1496**
- **H.R. 3115 (Roy, TX; 15 cosponsors – Cline, Good)**
- **S. 1496 (Scott, FL; 1 cosponsor)**



OPM Customer Service

- **Support improvements to OPM customer service**
NARFE has continued to receive member complaints on OPM customer service
- **Progress**
 - **House appropriations committee report**
 - Includes NARFE-drafted language expressing concerns about OPM customer service levels, requests reporting on progress
 - **Senate appropriations committee report**
 - Directs increased funding levels to improving OPM customer service, IT modernization, and implementation of the Postal Service Health Benefits program



Protect Earned Retirement and Health Benefits

- **Oppose cuts to earned retirement and health benefits**
- **Past congressional proposals (opposed) include:**
 - Increased contributions toward retirement
 - Reducing rate of return on TSP G fund
 - Reductions to/Elimination of COLAs
 - Elimination of FERS annuity supplement
 - Eliminate FERS entirely
 - Increase employee share of FEHB premiums



Improve Medicare Integration with FEHB

- **Support policies to reduce health care costs through improved integration of Medicare with FEHB**
 - Maintain choice for retirees re: Medicare Part B enrollment
 - Provide more plan options that provide reimbursement for Medicare Part B premiums, increase reimbursement amounts
 - Ensure FEHB plans benefit from prescription drug prices negotiated by the Department of Health and Human Services for Medicare Part D plans
 - Allow cost savings through Part D integration to gain benefits, including new ones from Inflation Reduction Act:



Recommendations—For the 119th Congress—JAN. 2025

- Include language applying FEHB-related provisions to PSHB
- Support opt-out for Part D for postal annuitants
- Oppose fast-track consideration of legislation that could include cuts to earned benefits
- Support allowing in-plan Roth conversions for TSP participants
- Support lifetime identity theft protection for victims of OPM security breaches
- Support coverage of assistive reproductive technology services
- Support delegation of authority to agencies to rehire annuitants without salary offset

VA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION—119th CONGRESS



- Sen Mark Warner(D)
 - Sen Tim Kane (D)
 - 1st Rob Wittman (R)
 - 2nd Jen Kiggans (R)
 - 3rd Bobby Scott (D)
 - 4th Jennifer McClellan (D)
 - 5th **John McGuire III (R) (NEW)**
 - 6th Ben Cline (R)
 - **7th Eugene Vindman (D) (NEW)**
 - 8th Don Beyer (D)
 - 9th Morgan Griffith (R)
 - 10th **Suhas Subramanyam (D) (NEW)**
 - 11th Gerry Connolly (D)
- **8 Democrats, 5 Republicans—Same as the last 118th Congress**



Overview of Activities

- Action-letters via campaigns of our priorities (WEP/GPO, Equal COLAs, etc.)
- Phone “banking”
- Social Media
- Letter to the Editor (LTEs)
- Educational videos
- Community events
- Targeted grass tops actions
- Benchmarks



Grassroots Benchmark

What are Benchmarks? These are goals set for the various grassroots actions taken. It is a new NARFE grassroots initiative to improve activism and create incentive!

How do Benchmarks work? Members can earn points on their federations behalf by taking different grassroots actions. Benchmarks are set on a quarterly basis and calculated by federation size to ensure fairness. *Ways you can earn points:*

HOW DO WE GET POINTS?



- **Action letters—to members and newspapers**
- **[Sending a Tweet](#)**
- **[Engaging with Congress](#)** (must report via **[event feedback form](#)**)

• **FOLLOW THE LINKS: WWW.NARFE.ORG , HOME, ADVOCACY, NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ACTION CENTER, MEMBER CONGRESSIONAL EVENT FEEDBACK FORM**

What is the incentive? Federations that earn Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze designations could win a special prize!

Benchmarks



GRASSROOTS BENCHMARKS

| Relationship building with members of Congress and their staff: | Platinum 100 pts | Gold 80 pts | Silver 60 pts | Bronze 40 pts |
|--|---------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Member of Congress attends NARFE Federation/Chapter meeting | X | | | |
| Chief of Staff attends NARFE Federation/Chapter meeting | | X | | |
| Legislative Director, State/District Director or Legislative Assistant with policy jurisdiction attends NARFE Federation/Chapter meeting | | | X | |
| Any other staffer attends NARFE Federation/Chapter meeting | | | | X |
| Meeting with member of Congress (in-person/virtual) | X | | | |
| Meeting with Chief of Staff, Legislative Director, State/District Director or Legislative Assistant with policy jurisdiction (in-person/virtual) | | X | | |
| Meeting with any other staffer (in-person/virtual) | | | X | |

VFN BENCHMARK RESULTS



1st quarter 2024—Bronze

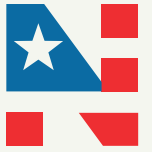
2nd quarter 2024– Platinum

First Halve Average---Gold

3rd quarter 2024-- Platinum

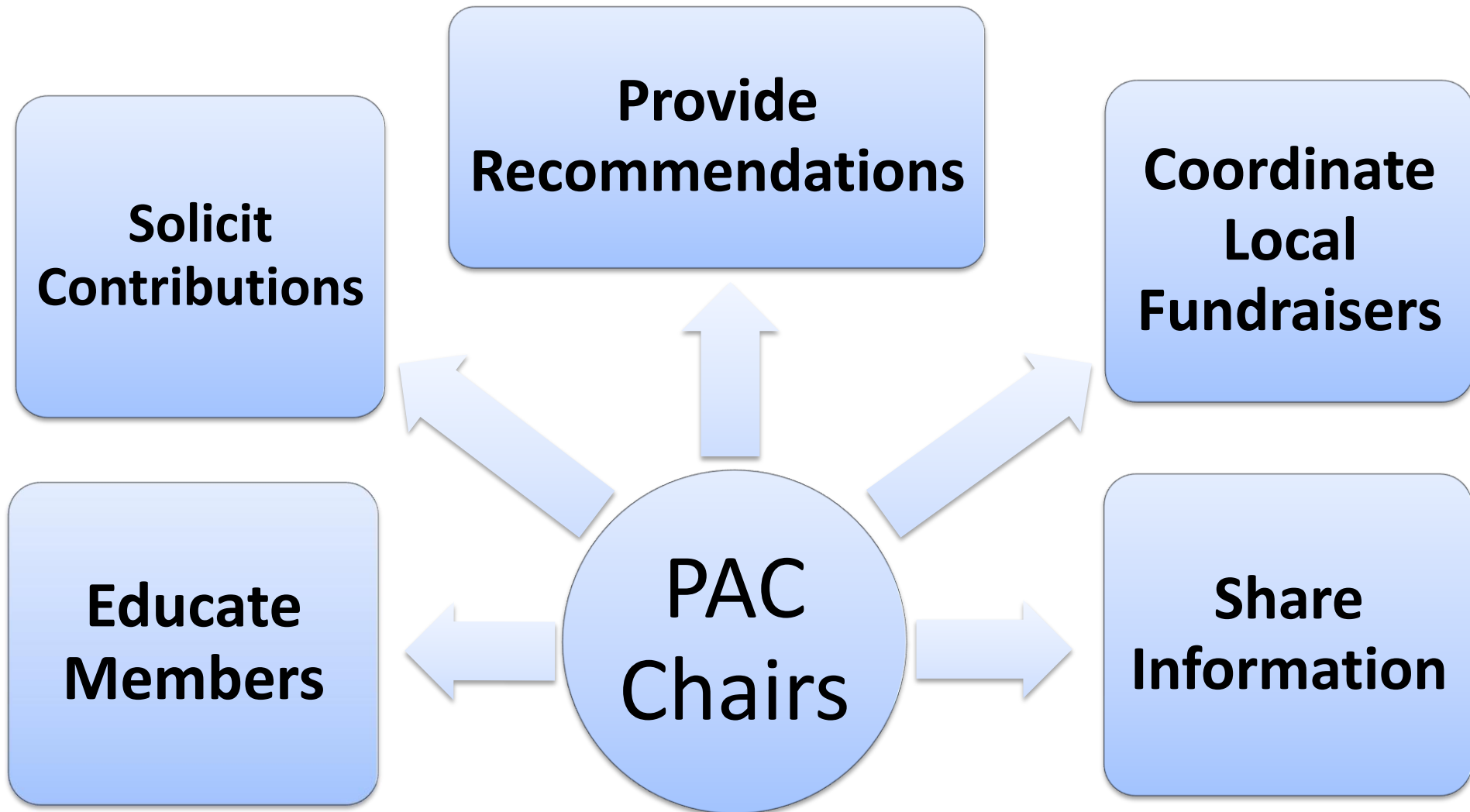
- **820 letters-1633 point**
- **4 congressional meetings-440 points**
- **TOTAL POINTS 2073!!! Well Done—Thank You**



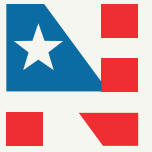


- **What is NARFE-PAC?**
- **Why is it important?**
- **How does it work?**
- **How does it affect me?**
- **YOU CAN HELP!!!**

NARFE PAC Process



Provide Recommendations



**Receive
candidate
request**

**Federation
recommendation**

**NARFE-PAC
Board makes
final decision**

Factors Considered



Support of NARFE issues

Relationship with NARFE and its members

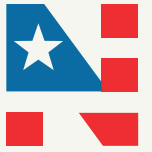
Federation recommendation

Influence of legislator

Competitiveness of race

Overall NARFE-PAC budget

NARFE-PAC Goals 2023-2024



Raise: \$1.6 million

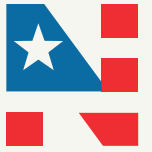


Disburse: \$1.2 million



Attend: 125 in-district fundraisers

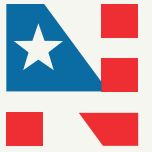
Become a NARFE-PAC Sustainer!



**Sustainer: \$10+ per month
via annuity withholding or
credit card**

**Maximize your support of
NARFE-PAC by making automatic,
monthly contributions!**

PAC Dos and Don'ts



- **Do:**
 - **Raise NARFE-PAC funds at every chapter and federation meeting**
 - **Tell members why NARFE-PAC is important**
 - **Explain the giving levels and incentives**
 - **Have incentives and promotional materials on hand**
 - **Remember that only NARFE members can contribute to NARFE-PAC**

PAC Dos and Don'ts



- **Don't:**
 - **Talk about NARFE-PAC in a congressional office**
 - OK at fundraising events
 - **Suggest a quid pro quo of PAC funds for official acts**
 - **Use chapter funds to contribute to NARFE-PAC**
 - **Forget that contributions to NARFE-PAC are not tax-deductible**

VFN 2021-2022 PAC Contributions

117th CONGRESS



- **TOTAL--\$145,602**
 - **CHAPTERS--\$64,346**
 - **VA NATIONAL Members--\$49,597**
 - **NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTORS--1342**
 - **CHAPTERS—698**
 - **VA NATIONAL—644**
 - **Number of Sustainers—38**
 - **Chapters—33**
 - **VA National--5**

VFN PAC 2023-2024 NUMBERS (118th) as of 9/30/24



- TOTAL VA PAC COLLECTIONS
 - ✓ \$104,877 Total collected (**3 months left in cycle**)
 - ✓ \$49,681 National; \$55,196 Chapters
 - ✓ 1,247 Total Members— 683 National ; 564 Chapter
 - ✓ 38-Total Sustainers—4 National; 34 Chapters
- ✓ **THERE IS STILL TIME TO CONTRIBUTE!!!!**
- TOTAL DISTRIBUTED as of 9/30/24: \$67,000
 - ✓ \$43,500 to Members (8 of 13)
 - ✓ \$23,500 to 5 Member PACs, \$5,000 to 3 Members, \$2,500 to 1 Member & \$6,000 to 1 member

Top VFN Chapters 118th Congress as of 9/30/24



- #1 Annandale 1159-- \$6,554
 - #2 Arlington 0007--\$5,473
 - #3 Woodbridge 1270--\$4,725
 - #4 Springfield 0893--\$4.139
 - #5 Fairfax 0737--\$3,790
 - #6Fredericksburg 0090--\$3,255
 - #7 Dulles 1241—\$3,163
-
- **There is still time to become the leader of the PCA in the 118th Congress!!!**

118th PAC Distributions in VA Through 9/30/24



- **A total of \$43,000 was distributed to individual members of the VA Congressional Delegation as of 9/30/24**
 - **Virginia 01 Rob Wittman (R) \$7,500**
 - **Virginia 02 Jennifer Kiggans (R) \$1,000**
 - **Virginia 03 Bobby Scott (D) \$3,000**
 - **Virginia 07 Abigail Spanberger (D) \$1,000**
 - **Virginia 08 Don Beyer (D) \$10,000**
 - **Virginia 10 Jennifer Wexton (D) \$2,000**
 - **Virginia 11 Gerry Connolly (D) \$9,000**
 - **Senator Kaine (D) \$10,000**
- **In addition, a total of \$23,500 was distributed to the Leadership PACs of Senator Kaine, and Congressmen Wittman, Beyer (\$5,000 each) and \$6,000 Connolly \$2,500 to Senator Warner**



NARFE WEB SITE: EXCELLENT RESOURCE!!

- ▶ National Legislative Action Center (Letters)
- ▶ Legislative Hotline (Messages)
- ▶ Issue Briefs and Fact Sheets
- ▶ Advocacy Webinars
- ▶ Grassroots (Tool- How To)
- ▶ Grassroots Advocacy Month
- ▶ PAC Information
- ▶ [WWW: NARFE.ORG/ADVOCACY/](http://WWW.NARFE.ORG/ADVOCACY/)



- **Don't miss NARFE's premier virtual grassroots training conference! Attend grassroots advocacy training sessions and “lobby day” where you join your fellow NARFE members in bringing our message directly to lawmakers and their staff.**
- **Coming June 2025**
- **Specific dates to be determined after release of congressional calendar**

TAKE AWAY POINTS



1. USE THE NARFE ADVOCACY WEB SITE TO STAY INFORMED
2. USE ADVOCACY TOOLS TO SEND LETTERS TO CONGRESS
 - Grassroots Advocacy
 - Take Action (Use Form to report congressional contacts)
 - Advocacy Updates
 - Issue Briefs & Fact Sheets
 - NARFE PAC
3. **CONTACT SENATORS WARNER & KAINE ON HR 82!!!**
4. HELP THE VFN TO SCORE BENCHMARK POINTS By using the Advocacy WEB site to send letters to Congress
5. CONSIDER BECOMING A CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT LEADER
6. STILL TIME TO SUPPORT NARFE PAC

QUESTIONS?



What have I missed?

What other issues are on your mind?

What other type of Training would you like the VFN to sponsor?

CONTACT INFORMATION

Email: advocacy@narfe.org

Request copies at
Gastongianni@aol.com

Contribute at:
www.narfe.org/narfe-pac/