

# NARFE

## FEDERAL BENEFITS EXPERTS

*Reaching Out*

*February 2025*

*Arlington, VA Chapter 7*

### National Active & Retired Federal Employees Association

**Meetings: 2nd Wed of Month Sept through May (except December) Beech Rm, Lubber Run Community Ctr, 300 N. Park Dr., Arlington - 12:15 p.m.**

#### *President's Message*

*Pat Meyers*

Happy Valentine's Day to all of you! Wow - 2025 has tested us early with winter. We're sorry that our January meeting was cancelled, but with difficult travel conditions, it was preferable to keep everyone safe. The good news is that our scheduled January speaker, Sydney Palinkas, RAFT Dementia Education and Outreach Coordinator for Arlington County, will join us at our February 12 meeting to present a program on support services available to patients and caregivers, especially tips for maintaining caregiver resilience. In addition, join us for Valentine treats.

Given the flurry of executive orders to date, it looks like NARFE will have its hands full this year in protecting the benefits and rights of federal and postal employees and retirees. Many of you have likely seen the NARFE Newsline of 21 January in which NARFE President Bill Shackelford responded to the executive orders related to the federal workforce. His response is well worth reading. For those who may have missed it, copies will be available at our February meeting.

**IMPORTANT DATES:** April 6-9, 2025. The VFN will celebrate its 70th Anniversary at the Annual Conference at the Hotel Madison & Shenandoah Conference Center in Harrisonburg, VA. The theme for this event is "Our Future - Stronger Together". All chapter members are invited and encouraged to attend. The chapter will reimburse registration fees of attendees. Additional details are provided below.

Another upcoming event sponsored by the Arlington Historical Society takes place on Thursday, February 13, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. The program, celebrating Black History Month is "Celebrate Arlington's Ethiopian Community. This free event is provided on Zoom and in person at Marymount University Library Auditorium. See registration details at <https://arhist.org/event>

#### *Legislative Corner*

*Ed Weiler*

#### **Federal Legislation**

##### **WEP-GPO Repeal**

After what seemed to have become an interminable slog, NARFE and its many political allies finally succeeded in their quest to repeal the WEP and GPO provisions in Social Security law (*P.L. 118-273*, Jan. 5, 2025, for the history-minded in our midst). Looking ahead, the next challenge for those affected by these reduction/offset provisions lies with the new law's implementation by the Social Security Administration (SSA). As of this writing (1/22/2025), the most recent information I could find from SSA regarding implementation was on its website (bearing a posting date of Jan. 6, 2025), whereby:

February 2025

(1) Those who have previously filed for SS benefits and had them partially offset need not take any action other than to ensure that SSA has a current mailing address and/or direct deposit information. Most people will be able to accomplish this task on-line with their personal *mySocialSecurity* Account. Ongoing implementation updates will be provided via this avenue. Those without an existing account may create one through [Login.gov](https://www.login.gov).

(2) Those who have not previously filed for SS benefits (for whatever reason, including knowledge that such benefits would have been totally offset) may also file on-line at [ssa.gov/apply](https://ssa.gov/apply), or schedule an in-person appointment at an SSA field office.

As a parochial epilogue to the WEP-GPO Repeal saga, I took the opportunity at a recent Town Hall meeting (Yorktown High School, on 1/16/2025) held by Rep. Don Beyer (D-VA-8) to wave Chapter 7's banner (figuratively speaking), and thank him for his support on several votes that led to repeal. In his response, he summarized the legislation for those in the audience who might have been unfamiliar with the issue; and next, somewhat to my surprise, he noted that our victory came with a hefty price tag--- \$196 billion over the coming 10 years from an already foundering Social Security vessel. Make of this what you will.

### **Saving the Civil Service Act**

On Jan. 16<sup>th</sup> of this year, Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-VA-11) refiled his bill from the previous Congress (*HR 1002*) that would prevent any competitive Civil Service position from being reclassified into "excepted service," and thus outside of protections under merit-system rules, without express Congressional consent. The impetus behind *HR 1002* was to counter an Executive Order under the first Trump Administration that would have provided for a new "Schedule F" designed to classify a wide swath of Civil Servants as at-will employees. While proponents view Schedule F as a needed tool to promote policy coherence and Federal worker accountability, many opponents deem it tantamount to a return to the "spoils system" that prevailed before passage of the *Pendleton Act* in 1883.

While *HR 1002* garnered 99 co-sponsors (95 Ds; 4Rs) in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress, it never attained a committee hearing. A similar fate befell Sen. Tim Kaine's companion bill in the Senate (*S.399*), which had 20 cosponsors (20 Ds; 1 In). Given the current make-up of both chambers in Congress, prospects for passage in the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress are not bright for either of these reintroduced bills.

### **State Legislation**

After many years of trying, the Virginia Federation of NARFE Chapters (VFN) finally succeeded in attracting sponsors to introduce bills in the General Assembly that would address the inequitable treatment in Virginia tax law between CSRS pensions and Social Security benefits. Per *S943/HB2575*, a CSRS pensioner would be allowed to subtract 20 percent of such benefits from Federal Adjusted Gross Income (FAGI) to calculate his/her Virginia Adjusted Gross Income (VAGI). Currently, unlike Social Security benefits which are fully deductible, no CSRS benefits are deductible, and thus fully subject to Virginia's State Income Tax.

To be sure, attaining the first milestone of attracting a bill sponsor is always heartening; but don't break out the champagne just yet. On Jan. 21<sup>st</sup>, the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee voted 14-0 to "pass by indefinitely" *S943*. This knock-out punch leaves us with *HB2575*; and here's where you come in. Start tracking the progress of this bill (by going to <https://lis.virginia.gov/bill-search>, and type 'hb2575' into the "bill number" box); and if/when it passes out of the House Finance Committee, contact your

Delegate (Del. Hope for many Chapter 7 members) to urge its passage in the full House. It ain't over 'til it's over.

### ***SAVE THE DATE: VFN ANNUAL CONFERENCE & 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION***

All members are invited to attend this conference at the Hotel Madison, 710 S. Main Street, Harrisonburg, VA on April 6-9, 2025. It's theme and goals are to unite the VFN members with a shared vision of advocacy, education and empowerment. This event will feature exciting sessions, workshops, election of officers, exhibits, a memorial service, a silent auction and 50/50 raffle to benefit Alzheimer's research as well as great networking working opportunities. The early bird registration fee made by 2-17-2025 is \$95; the registration fee from 2/18 - 3/26/25 is \$120. The registration fee includes conference materials, the Monday welcome reception, lunch on Monday and Tuesday, the banquet on Tuesday night and morning and afternoon breaks. (What a bargain!) Chapter 7 will reimburse the registration fee for members who attend.

Hotel rates are the same as last year: \$107 per night plus tax. (Another bargain for great rooms!). The deadline for room reservations is March 17, 2025. Call 540-564-0200 to make reservations.

Registration can be completed on line by accessing <http://www.vanarfe.org/conf2025>. Fillable forms can also be downloaded and printed for mailing if preferred. Forms as well as additional information will also be available at the February meeting. We encourage you to consider attending especially in view of potential changes affecting federal and postal employees and retirees.

#### ***VFN Conference Silent Auction***

***Nancy Palmerino***

Another feature of the VFN Conference is the Silent Auction for Alzheimer's research. The committee is looking for donations with a minimum value of \$50. Items that have been popular in the past are jewelry, wine, original paintings, collectibles, timeshares, gift cards and baskets. Now is the perfect time to get a start on your spring cleaning and go through cabinets and drawers, and maybe even visit the basement and the attic to discover treasures you forgot you even possessed. Call Nancy Palmerino at 703-243-6546 if you have any questions or to arrange a pick up. Donations may also be brought to the February and March meetings. All donations must be received by April 1 and are tax deductible.

#### ***Become a Conference Supporter***

Even if you are not able to attend the conference, you can become a Conference Supporter. Sources of funding beyond the registration and banquet fees are required to fund the Conference. One additional source of funding is from Chapter Members who become Conference Supporters. The names of all Supporters will be listed in the Program Book which will be distributed to each attendee. Chapter members can show their support in one of the following categories: Platinum (\$100), Gold (\$75), Silver (\$50), Super Angel (\$25), Angel (\$20), Cheerleader (\$15), Booster (\$10) and Supporter (\$5).

If you wish to donate, please complete the form below, with a check payable to 2025 VFN Conference and mail to the address on the bottom of the form. Donations will also be accepted at our February and March meetings. Mailed contributions must be received by March 12 to guarantee publication of your name in the program book.

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## 2025 NARFE VFN Conference Supporter

Print your name as you would like it to appear in the program booklet.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Check applicable category: \_\_\_ Platinum (\$100) \_\_\_ Gold (\$75) \_\_\_ Silver (\$50) \_\_\_ Super Angel (\$25)  
\_\_\_ Angel (\$20) \_\_\_ Cheerleader(\$15) \_\_\_ Booster (\$10) \_\_\_ Supporter (\$5)

Include check, payable to "2025 VFN Conference" for total amount indicated. On the Memo line write "2025 VFN Conference Supporter". (Do not mail cash.) Mail to: Nancy Palmerino, Chapter Supporter Coordinator, 4503 4<sup>th</sup> Road North, Arlington, VA 22203

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### Contact Information

*President*  
Pat Meyers  
703-578-3372

*Legislative Chair*  
Edward Weiler  
703-241-8798

*Secretary*  
Nancy Palmerino  
703-243-6546

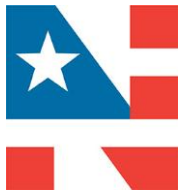
*Treasurer*  
Jim Hall  
703-841-0360

*Program Chair*  
Vacant

*Social Chair*  
Pat Meyers  
703-578-3372

*USPS Mail*  
P.O. Box 100971  
Arlington, VA 22210

*eMail*  
[chapter7narfe@gmail.com](mailto:chapter7narfe@gmail.com)



NARFE  
Arlington Chapter 7  
P.O. Box 100971  
Arlington, VA 22210