



**WILLIAM "BILL" SHACKELFORD
NARFE NATIONAL PRESIDENT**

Thank you for the invitation to speak to your 2023 Federation of Chapters Convention. I am deeply honored to have the opportunity to lead the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association that is recognized for almost a century as the go-to association devoted exclusively to serving and protecting the earned entitlements, rights and benefits of all federal retirees, employees and survivors.

Two years ago, NARFE celebrated its 100th Anniversary. My predecessors took this association from an uncertain future in February of 1921 to one of great promises. Those founders and many individuals since 1921 have worked tirelessly to showcase the critical role that NARFE plays in advocating for and protecting our earned benefits.

There's no doubt about it. NARFE is changing. But I assure you, our core values are not. We remain strong and committed to our mission – protecting the earned pay and benefits of our nation's current and future federal retirees. Our legislative voice is louder than ever. The service we provide to our membership is unwavering. We are poised to meet the challenges we are facing today and the ones that lie ahead, both within our association and on Capitol Hill.

Even though the Federal government, specifically the House of Representatives, hit a snag. The drawn-out selection of the Speaker of the House is also now in the past. Since mid-January, Congress has taken the opportunity to settle in and prepare to do what they were elected to do for the American people. NARFE continues to pursue one of the key pillars of its mission: to defend and advance the earned pay and benefits of America's civil servants.

While Congress has been making the headlines, our Advocacy Department has been setting the stage for representing the interests of all federal civilian employees and annuitants before the 118th Congress.

The issue we that we continue to hear about most often continues to be GPO/WEP reform or, better yet, repeal. On January 18th a letter was sent to the 117th Congress co-sponsors of GPO/WEP repeal, who had returned for the 118th Congress requesting these members to reconfirm their support of repeal. As of April 18, there were 226 House cosponsors of the repeal bill, H.R. 82.

Tennessee		
Congressional Districts	9	
Co-Sponsors	2	
	District-1	Harshbarger
	District-2	Burchett
3/7/2023	District-3	Fleischmann
	District-4	DesJariais
	District-5	Ogles
	District-6	Rose
	District-7	Green
	District-8	Kustoff
3/28/2023	District-9	Cohen

*NOTE: Representatives Fleischmann (District 3) and Cohen (District 9) were co-sponsors during the 117th Congress and have re-committed to support H.R. 82 in the 118th Congress. Representatives from Districts 1, 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8 were not co-sponsors of H.R. 82 in the 117th Congress and have **NOT** committed to co-sponsorship of H.R. 82 in the 118th Congress. Representative Ogles (District 5) was not a member of the 117th Congress and has **NOT** committed to co-sponsorship of H.R. 82 at this time.*

On the other side of Capitol Hill, the Senate counterpart to H.R. 82 is S. 597. As of April 18, there were 37 Senate cosponsors of S. 597. Obviously, 50 U.S. Senators would indicate strong support of S. 597. However, 60 votes are needed for passage. Neither Republican Senator Bill Hagerty or Republican Senator Marsha Blackburn have committed to co-sponsorship of S. 597.

Staff Vice President John Hatton will be providing a full update on NARFE advocacy efforts being made on your behalf.

I am energized by the opportunity that lies ahead. NARFE is now in the midst of a historic transformation that will enable us to have an even greater impact going forward.

Entering our second 100 years, I am confident that NARFE's hardworking and talented team will continue to build our association and advocating for and protecting the earned benefits of federal employees and annuitants. It is my hope that two years from now, I can stand before you to celebrate our success in increasing membership ... and that NARFE is on the road to recovery.

Last summer we participated in the first election for National Officers and Regional Vice Presidents since we celebrated our 100th anniversary. My interpretation of the results of the voting is that the 2023-2024 National Executive Board has been issued a mandate by the members to ensure that NARFE continues for now and the next 100 years.

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The definition of success is that at the end of each calendar year, the association has more members than it did at the beginning of the year. **We should accept no less.**

But there are questions:

Question 1: Can NARFE survive another one hundred years?

Question 2: If NARFE goes out of business, **which organization would** take up the mantle **defend our earned entitlements?**

The answer Question #2 is simple but frightening - - - **NO ONE.**

Interim Chief of Staff Johann Decastro and NARFE Membership Development Coordinator Jackie Bryant will provide a full update on NARFE membership strategy.

As many of you know, I emphasized my desire to improve the communication with our organization. When the accomplishments of the 2023-2024 National Executive Board are relegated to the annals of NARFE history, I hope that our efforts to improve communication among members (including National-only members), chapters, federations and NARFE Headquarters will be at the top of the list of our achievements. The previous NEB provided us with a good start with the approval of NARFE's online community - - FEDHub. What a concept - - all of our members making their greatest contribution to NARFE by talking and exchanging ideas about our organization.

I think that FEDHub is best resource to welcome National-only members to NARFE. Federation communities contain members who are part of chapters and also members that are national-only within that Federation. Imagine if you will, our Federation community administrators e-mailing all members of their community through FEDHub, including our National-only members and sharing chapter/federation information, i.e.,

meetings, newsletters and advocacy efforts. in the Federation community, so this is a great way to reach out to those National-only members. I encourage all chapters to work with their Federations to share specific chapter information.

Your representative on the National Executive Board is the Regional Vice President. I am asking that there be a full and frank discussion among members and your Regional Vice President about key NARFE issues. After all, an involved member is an interested member. As you can see, this is an “us” solution to a problem that has been around for thirty-seven years. And that most certainly will make us a stronger Association.

Remember, all that we do is made possible by you. Thank you for your membership, for your leadership, and for all that you do to help NARFE shine like a beacon for all government employees and retirees. It is an honor to serve as your president.

I welcome your ideas. **Together, we will make a difference.** Nowhere is the saying “it takes a village” truer than it is now, for NARFE. The future of NARFE is in our hands.