

NATIONAL LEGISLATION: Rolland Hamilton

Early November has come and gone and the election is over. You voted, a good citizen should. Were your candidates and propositions elected and approved? No matter, each one must remember that "WE" made the decisions and the majority rules, so even if disappointed in some of the resultant outcomes, we must live with "OUR" decisions, and pray that the voters together made the best choices. Now, all citizens must pull together to live in peace and comfort. Our nation is in dire economic straits already, and unity is sorely needed.

The anointed experts are busily looking for the reasons for the recession, and The Congress seems to have become convinced that tossing 700 billion dollars will start the correction of the problems. But the problems are myriad, not singular. Individuals, organizations and companies seem to have lost confidence in world wide economy. Housing financing and construction starts are resulting in problems including foreclosures and families without shelter. The automobile industry is in deep difficulties. Jobs are disappearing and unemployment statistics are the worst in many years. Retirement programs are being considered as possible contributors to the problems. It is apparent there is no single answer. Let us all hope and pray for improvements to alleviate the situations will come soon.

Inflation seems to have abated somewhat the last two months of the Federal Fiscal Year, and the COLA (Cost Of Living Adjustment) for most Federal civilian and military Retirees, social security beneficiaries, and foreign service retirement will be a 5.8% increase in the January payments. This is the highest since 1982.

President Bush signed legislation on September 30, (the last day of the fiscal year) to provide continuing appropriations through March 6, 2009.

You will soon be receiving data for the "Open Season" of your costs and benefits of health plans. If necessary, adjustments may be made November 10 through December 8, 2008.

Don't lose the centerfold information in your October 2008 issue of Retirement Life Magazine, for the 110th Congress edition of the Congressional Scorecard. Be prepared to be amazed at the accomplishments (and lack of them) of Congress in the last two years when you study the report.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: Herb Roth

During these past few months I have felt, at times, that I am on a "Merry-Go-Round" with all of the activities and life in general. I also find that it is time to consider the impact of what is happening in our lives, especially with our involvement in NARFE.

During the summer months and early fall we have had numerous Chapter activities and from my observation they have been well attended. These activities did not hap-

pen by themselves—it takes time and effort on the part of our membership to see that all of this happen. These activities will continue and go on as long as we have the desire to do so as members of NARFE.

The point I want to make at this time is, if we are going to continue as an active Chapter we need members to be involved in taking some of the Offices on the Executive Board and participate as committee members for the various activities. As I have mentioned numerous times in my "Presidents Message" in the Chatter, we have considerable talent in our membership. I am also aware of the fact that most retirees want to be "just retired" after a full career and not take on any more responsibilities. I had the very same feelings, but at one point I felt that there was a need for my greater participation. That need was to protect our retirement benefits, and benefits for current employees who will be following in our footsteps. Little did I know I would become the President of the Chapter

At the 2008 National Convention there were many comments made about the "Perfect Storm" that is gathering and might threaten federal benefits. With a new President and a new Congress, our work as an organization to defend our benefits will probably become an urgent reality.

What I am asking you at this time is to step forward and participate as an Officer or Committee Head. I found it to be a new and invigorating challenge plus you work and meet with one of the finest groups of people around.

If you are interested please contact me or Paul Andrews—our phone numbers appear in the monthly Chatter. See the box below.

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