



Member Update

NATCA Seeks to Protect Federal Employee Benefits

NATCA Members,

Late Thursday, the House passed its budget framework (budget resolution), establishing top-line limits for spending, taxes, deficits, and the public debt. With both the House and Senate now aligned on broad outlines, lawmakers must identify spending cuts that meet the framework's requirements while providing for the Administration's goals on permanent tax changes and increases to spending on its priority programs.

Each Congressional Committee must now work on legislative language to meet those overall instructions established by the budget resolution. During the remainder of the year, this could include proposed cuts to programs across the federal government, including to the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program (FEHB) and the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), with the supplemental annuity serving as a potential target.

At NATCA in Washington, the National Legislative Committee (NLC), National Executive Board (NEB), NATCA Activists from around the country, and the NATCA Government Affairs team actively engaged with congressional offices to explain how potential reductions in these programs would affect our members. We are continuing to urge lawmakers to protect FERS by preserving current benefit levels, including the supplemental annuity, and opposing any increase in employee contributions to FERS or FEHB.

The next—and more difficult—step for the Republican majorities, will be agreeing on specific program cuts and policy details needed to fulfill the requirements of the budget resolution. House Republican leaders are aiming to finalize the legislation by late May.

Below is a short summary of the budget reconciliation process:

- **Budget Resolution** (passed Thursday night) it is not a law; It sets overall policy goals including spending and cuts on a broad basis – includes instructions for committees of jurisdiction to rewrite laws/appropriations to meet the overall budget limits. Includes instructions that requires budget

reconciliation.

- **Committee Work** – Each committee of jurisdiction writes provisions to meet the overall budget resolution requirements. (e.g. save \$50 billion on health care; make expiring tax cuts permanent).
- **Budget reconciliation** – Committee work does not pass as separate authorization bills or appropriations bills – instead they are combined as a single package called budget reconciliation for a simple majority vote (avoiding the 60-vote procedural vote to move forward in the Senate). Once the reconciliation bill passes both chambers it moves to the President’s desk for signature. It becomes a law and overwrites portions of existing law related to spending, revenues (taxes), deficit, and the total debt. Normally, budget reconciliation is used to pass a tax bill avoiding the Senate procedures, but it can be used more broadly if it is related to government spending and revenues.
- **Appropriations** – Appropriations is still required to fund the government, because neither the budget nor budget reconciliation provides money. They only provide a framework and change the law within that framework, respectively. Each appropriations subcommittee must meet the overall budget limitations established for their subcommittees, but because the budget itself isn’t law, there are ways to increase the spending above those limits by agreement.

NATCA is coordinating with our union allies to educate lawmakers, pushing back against harmful benefit changes. We have teamed up with other public safety unions with members in special retirement classes who receive the supplemental annuity due to a mandatory retirement age including the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) to protect our earned benefits. We are working with our supporters in Congress to proactively protect our benefits while also identifying and responding quickly to emerging threats.

Following the vote Thursday night, the House and Senate have adjourned and will be in recess until April 28. The NLC is identifying opportunities for NATCA Legislative Activists to connect with lawmakers back home in states and districts during the recess and coordinating with NATCA Government Affairs for visits when lawmakers return to Washington.

Finally, once the proposals begin taking shape, we ask you to be ready to jump into action when the NEB asks everyone to participate in campaigns by sending emails, making phone calls, or sending hand-written letters to their member of Congress.

In Solidarity,

Nick Daniels
NATCA President

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