



Member Update

Update on Grassroots Legislative Efforts to Protect the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS)

NATCA Members,

Congress is still in the early phases of the budget reconciliation process, and we continue to engage on working with Congressional committees and members of Congress on the effects of harmful proposals that negatively impact our retirement system.

This week, Allison Schwaegel (STL), the Vice-Chair of the National Legislative Committee (NLC), and Corey Soignet (IAH), NLC Southwest Region NLC member, visited Congressional offices to educate them on the importance of preserving our current and promised retirement provisions. NATCA Government Affairs staff continued their efforts to ensure that our message is delivered. Anthony Shifano, CLT FacRep, has been engaged with his Congressional contacts with whom he has built relationships and helped ensure that NATCA was in conversations with key staff for the Oversight and Government Reform (OGR) Committee and House leadership.

I met directly with Senator Ted Cruz, Chair of the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee and attended a small dinner with him to continue our conversations. Meanwhile, we also spent the day at FAA Headquarters, meeting with airline representatives to emphasize the importance of collaborative solutions on training, staffing, and modernization.

These efforts have been an amplification of our engagement in the grassroots campaign we announced last week. If you have not yet participated, please take a moment to send your message to Congress here:

<https://www.natca.org/actioncenter/>

Today, committees are marking up portions of the budget reconciliation package, and there are real threats to the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) that are being debated.

The OGR Committee started the week proposing very severe cuts to all federal employee rights and benefits, including raising the FERS contribution rates for

all employees to 4.4% regardless of date of hire, conversion from high-3 retirement calculation to a high-5 calculation, elimination of the supplemental annuity, and forcing all new hires into a choice between paying an extra 5% toward their retirement or giving up merit principals and the ability to challenge adverse actions. By the time the markup began, NATCA had succeeded in convincing the committee leadership to remove the increase to FERS contributions for air traffic controllers and retain the high-3 calculation for air traffic controllers. We are still working to correct the other harms.

It's important to remember that these markups merely the first step in the budget reconciliation process. Each House committee with jurisdiction over portions of the Budget Reconciliation bill must complete their business. Then, it must go to the floor of the House of Representatives and face further amendments. After that, it must move to the Senate, which has not yet begun holding markups on its own Budget Reconciliation bill, through its committee structure, allowing for amendments both during the committee markups and on the floor. After both chambers pass their respective bills, they will have to go to a conference committee to resolve any differences between the bills before they return to the floor for a final up-down vote with no additional opportunities for amendments.

We will keep you updated as the markup process continues.

We are making progress, but our work is not done. Your advocacy makes a difference and must continue.

In Solidarity,

Nick Daniels
NATCA President

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