



Support the volunteer organization that supports you!

[Join AASBCR®](#) or [make a donation](#)

## AASBCR® Lobbies with NRLN

September 2023

AASBCR® President Mary Foley and Communications VP Tom Gray participated in this week's NRLN Fly-In to lobby their senators and representatives for selected retiree issues. Mary and Tom met with staff in the offices of Senator Durbin, Senator Duckworth, and Congressman Casten.

NRLN – the National Retiree Legislative Network – is our lobbying partner, advocating for the rights of over 2 million retirees from dozens of companies. The Fly-In was their effort to deliver the same message to all our representatives in person and at the same time, through meetings with their constituents who are NRLN members.

These are the issues discussed with the legislators, with primary emphasis on the first three:

**Protect Retirees in Pension Plan De-risking:** When an employer transfers pensions to an insurance company to become annuities (“de-risking”), plan participants lose the protection of the Pension Benefits Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) and Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA). The NRLN’s proposal is to protect beneficiaries by requiring a secondary insurance policy in case the initial insurer defaults. Requests were made to introduce a bill with the NRLN’s proposed statutory amendments to ERISA, extending its protections to pension plan participants whose pension is converted to an annuity.

**Prevent Privatization of Medicare - Prevent Privatization of Medicare** - Billions in taxpayer subsidies are being paid as rebates to private insurance companies for Medicare Advantage (MA) plans. As a result, they cost 9% more than Original Medicare/Supplement plans and provide benefits that original Medicare Fee-for-Service cannot compete with. These rebates to the insurance companies are unnecessary, anti-competitive and waste taxpayer money. We proposed ending or capping these rebates and requiring that MA plans have quality and service commitments as part of their contract and not something for which they get paid an extra rebate. MA plans should cost the taxpayer less than Original Medicare, which was Congress’ original intent.

Bulletins are available for AASBCR® members only.  
Copying or forwarding is not authorized by AASBCR®

**Funding Social Security Is Essential for America's Promise** - Social Security is not a welfare program paid for by the U.S. Government. Social Security is funded by payroll taxes and cannot add a penny to the federal debt. The NRLN opposes a proposal to raise the full Social Security retirement age from age 67 to 69. Social Security's funding gap should be closed – but not by cutting its benefits. The NRLN advocates closing the funding gap through a modest increase in the current payroll tax rate for employees and employers, and by making all wages subject to the tax.

**Reduce Prescription Drug Prices** - Congress needs to do more to increase competition and thereby reduce the cost of medicines. Legislation is needed to end pay-for-delay and other brand name drugmakers' tactics that obstruct generic drugs from coming to market. Legislation is needed for importation of safe and less expensive drugs from Canada and other countries that meet FDA quality standards. Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) must have transparency.

**Make HCTC Permanent** - The NRLN will urge passage of **H.R.3912, Bob von Schwedler Permanent Health Coverage Tax Credit Expansion Act**, to make HCTC permanent or at least pass **H.R.2914, Health Coverage Tax Credit Reauthorization Act of 2023**, to reauthorize HCTC through 2027. This will help retirees aged 55-64 cover the cost of health insurance if their pensions have been taken over by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC), or if their job was outsourced abroad under the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA).

**Pass Susan Muffley Act** – The NRLN urges Members of Congress to pass **H.R.735 and S.2277, Susan Muffley Act**. The federal government picked winners and losers in the General Motors and Delphi auto industry bankruptcies of 2009. The Delphi salaried retirees (including members of the NRLN Delphi Retirees Chapter) were singled out to have their pension plan terminated and taken over by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC). This resulted in 20,000 Delphi salaried retirees losing up to 70% of earned and promised pensions. The Susan Muffley Act would restore the terminated pensions, making the retirees whole.

These are issues of equity and fairness, which can easily be addressed without the political bitterness that accompanies many other issues. We urged our representatives to lead or support the effort to resolve them quickly.