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MAY 17TH MEETING R. LEMMONS

NARFE Free State Chapter 378 will meet Wednesday, April 19, 2017, at noon, at the BAKER WETLAND'S. The program is at noon, followed by lunch, and a brief meeting. Guests are welcome.

A reservation and prepaid remittance are required for lunch. If you run late in making a lunch reservation, call Dianne Throop at 785-841-1408 before Monday. We need a headcount for lunch. Lunch is optional, so you can come for the program and skip lunch.

There is a map below. Michigan St. ends in the parking lot of the Wetlands. Hope to see you all there. Dianne Throop says it's a very good program.

RECAP APRIL 19TH MEETING

Dr. Patrick Miller, Assistant Professor of Political Science at KU, returned on April 19th to speak to NARFE Chapter 378. He reviewed Trump's first 100 days and answered questions.

Once again, his presentation was both interesting and informative. He thinks this is an important time for domestic policy, foreign policy and political winds.

He doesn't get caught up in who comes and goes at the White House. He said it was unusual to have so much drama in the White House, and that Trump's management style is to bring in people and pit them against each other to get the best from them. Dr. Miller said, "Maybe that {method} works in business, but maybe not in White House."

The points he made included:

- o Domestic policy—This is the first time Republicans have control of the House, Senate and Presidency. Trump is almost at day 100 and there is no major legislation and no plans for a budget yet. Presidents usually come in with agenda. Trump's campaign agenda stated that on "Day 1" he would *repeal and replace Obama care*, but the bill the Republicans attempted, didn't even come to a vote in the House. While an *infrastructure* bill might be passed early, there isn't even a plan yet. Some Republicans will not vote for more debt so nothing there.

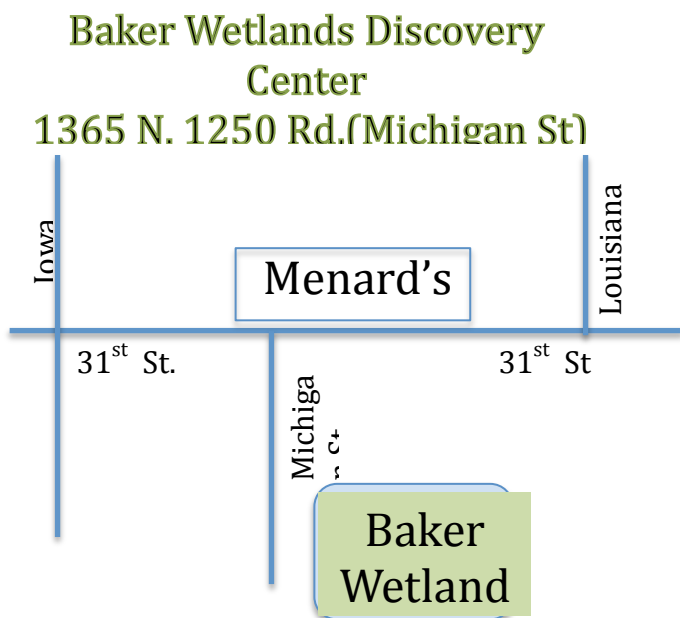
- o Foreign Policy---*Immigration* = 0, no bills in Congress. A lot of huff and puff, but changes have been through executive orders. He can change things at the edges through executive orders, not being

KUDOS AND THANK YOU'S

- Dianne Throop for suggesting and organizing the May meeting to be held at the Baker Wetlands.
- John Rowe for volunteering to fill the NARFE PAC Chair position.
- Leroy Hahn for calling attention to and providing the link to the PDF file of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director's 4/12/17 memorandum to Department and Agency Heads. You can find it on page 3.

ALZHEIMER'S JOHN SCOTT

Chapter 378 received \$36.00 at the April meeting for Alzheimer's Research. YTD donations = \$270.00. I received a Thank You card from Tom Huntzinger's wife, Pat, thanking our Chapter for the donations in Tom's name.



discriminating, just gutting. The President can do more without Congress in foreign policy. He doesn't actually have a policy. Not much has changed in Iraq, Serbia, China a currency manipulator. China really doesn't have influence over N. Korea. There have been interesting mixed-signals. Concerning Sierra, Trump during pre-election said "hands off," and has now continued Obama's policy. Lots of people supported the bombing of Sierra. The shock was Trump did it. Much of the world doesn't know what to think. Democrats feel relief that not much has happened.

All of the special elections are in Republican districts so just looking to see if the Democrats make a good showing. The biggest swing votes are in white wealthy suburbia, which usually vote Republican. The special election in Georgia may mean something for Democrats, as the wealthy, educated, white votes are up these special elections. If you are a Democrat, possible candidates may be encouraged to run if Democrats have momentum. News for midterm elections in the Senate is not as good for Democrats.

Trump did get the Supreme Court nominee through, although that was surrounded by lots of bad politics. McConnell is wrong, there is no tradition of not considering/approving a Supreme Court nominee during a sitting President's last year in office. Reagan put in Kennedy during Reagan's last year in office. Both parties in the Senate are throwing traditions under the bus. *Going Nuclear* was a BIG change, politics way too partisan.

Reagan, Clinton, Bush, and Obama had accomplishments in their first 100 days.

Q-What do we have to look forward to?

A-After WWII, both parties were rather moderate. Fights were over the idea of what is best. Both parties think their policies are best. The moderate Republicans were a little right of center, while moderate Democrats were a little left of center. Today they {Republicans and Democrats} have a lot of contempt for each other. Which came first the chicken or egg? Is the nastiness because of party affiliation, or trying to please voters? Maybe need more long-term policy fixes.

Q-Policy, does that imply strategy? Where is the strategy? *i.e.* Planned parenthood being defunded.

*A--Maybe the strategy is just to be against everything. Trump is trying to divide Democrats. *i.e.* Obama Care (ACA) was modeled after the HEART Bill.

Q--How is Trump viewing government agencies?

A--If you track his {Trump's} statements over time, Paul Ryan libertarian--get rid of EPA, trying to repeal/replace Obama Care didn't work, he's taking all budget tax cut ideas from the Heritage Foundation. There is a lot of outside influence coming in. Dr. Miller doesn't think he (Trump) cares. It is easy to talk about eliminating agencies like the EPA and PBC, when you can't do anything, but now they have the power (Presidency, Senate and House) to do it. What about drinking water protection? Amtrak lines have been targeted, but Republicans along the line through KS don't want it.

Q—What about tax reform?

A—It's hard to say Republicans favor progressive taxes; they help those with higher incomes. 95% of tax savings would go to the upper 5%. There is no direct effect that cutting taxing leads to more jobs.

Q--What about agency cuts? A memorandum was sent to department heads and agencies requesting was to eliminate or reform agencies.

A--The Founding Fathers wanted government to do what business won't do for citizens. The Founding Fathers would be rolling over with idea of cutting protections for the public. You could cut Medicare, Medicaid, and defense and still not have a balanced budget. Forty percent of Americans think budget overages are due to foreign aid, but foreign aid is less than 3% of the budget.

NOTES: (1) Following the meeting, Leroy Hahn emailed the following: "When I mentioned this during my followup question to Patrick Miller today, it did not seem that many in the NARFE group (or Dr Miller) were aware of it (it was a link in a recent Legislative Report)." Leroy provided the website for the pdf of the memorandum he referenced at the meeting. Memorandum M-17-22 was sent from the Office of the President by Mick Mulvaney, Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), to the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies. The memorandum's subject was: *Comprehensive Plan for Reforming the Federal Government and Reducing the Federal Civilian Workforce*. The first

paragraph covers *Purpose and Scope*, stating the following: *Through the actions described below, President Trump aims to make government lean, accountable, and more efficient.*

To begin addressing this challenge, on January 23, 2017, the President issued a Memorandum (Hiring Freeze PM) imposing a Federal "Hiring Freeze." This ensured immediate action was taken to halt the growth of the Federal workforce until a "long-term plan to reduce the size of the Federal Government's workforce" is put in place. On March 16, 2017, the President submitted his Budget Blueprint to Congress proposing to eliminate funding for programs that are unnecessary, outdated, or not working. Additionally, on March 13, 2017, the President issued an Executive Order (Reorganization EO) directing the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to submit a comprehensive plan to reorganize Executive Branch departments and agencies.

The link to the entire memorandum is:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/omb/memoranda/2017/M-17-22.pdf>

*(2) Obama Care as compared to the HEART Act referenced by Dr. Miller was fully explained at the website:

www.politifact.com/punditfact/statements/2013/.../aca-gop-health-care-plan-1993/ by Jon Greenberg on Friday, November 15th, 2013 at 8:30 a.m. 1993: *Health care takes center stage*

President Bill Clinton took on an ill-fated effort to reform health care in 1993. As the president's task force (led by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton) worked behind closed doors to craft solutions to ever-rising health care costs and a growing number of uninsured families, Republicans scrambled to forge an alternative.

Republican Sen. John Chafee of Rhode Island was the point man. The bill he introduced, [Health Equity and Access Reform Today](#), (yes, that spells HEART) had a list of 20 co-sponsors that was a who's who of Republican leadership. There was Minority Leader Bob Dole, R- Kan., Sens. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, Richard Lugar, R-Ind., and many others. There also were two Democratic co-sponsors.

Among other features, the Chafee bill included:

An individual mandate;

Creation of purchasing pools;

Standardized benefits;

Vouchers for the poor to buy insurance;

A ban on denying coverage based on a pre-existing condition.

"You would find a great deal of similarity to provisions in the Affordable Care Act," Sheila Burke, Dole's chief of staff in 1993, told PunditFact via email. "The guys were way ahead of the times!! Different crowd, different time, suffice it to say."

*That said, the Senate plan from 1993 was **not identical** to the health care law that passed in 2010. The Republican bill did not expand Medicaid as Obamacare does, and it did have medical malpractice tort reform, which the current law does not. In contrast to the current employer mandate, the Chafee bill required employers to offer insurance, but they were under no obligation to help pay for it.*

Policy differences aside, health care scholar and former Clinton adviser Paul Starr at Princeton University said the Affordable Care Act is distinct in one other important way.

"The Chafee plan did not spell out how increased coverage would be financed," Starr said. "It was more of a symbolic bill than an actual piece of legislation."

In fact, after the bill was introduced, the Senate never took it up again.

Conservative pushback

Even before Chafee brought his bill forward, some conservatives were trying to scuttle it.

More hard-line senators such as Phil Gramm, R-Texas, House Republicans and the Heritage Foundation saw the Chafee bill as an unacceptable compromise. What they wanted was outright defeat of the president's approach.

No single alternative emerged, but there were a variety of Republican proposals. One in the House drew more co-sponsors than any other, 72 of them. It was called the [Action Now Health Reform Act](#), but its scope was limited. Much of it focused on insurance for small businesses and the self-employed. It offered some protections for people with pre-existing conditions and included changes in medical malpractice law.

There was a smorgasbord of other House Republican bills. Like Chafee's bill, none of them went anywhere.

Our ruling

Qualls said the Affordable Care Act "was the Republican plan in the '90s." The bill she had in mind did have a strong roster of Republicans behind it,

and it did share many major features with the Affordable Care Act. There were some significant differences but in a side-by-side comparison, the similarities dominate.

However, to call it the Republican plan, as though a majority of Republicans endorsed it, goes too far. The House Republicans took a different path, and there was opposition from more hard-line members of the Republican coalition. It is telling that the Chafee bill never became a full blown bill and never came up for a vote.

MEMBERSHIP

DIANNE THROOP

We have a new member, Kelly McCartney, who transferred to Chapter 378 from Rhode Island.

Hope to see you all at the Baker Wetlands for the May meeting.

NARFE LEGISLATIVE HOTLINE 4/7/17

Webinar Recording Available:

‘Fed Up(date) with the 115th Congress’

Interested in getting the latest on congressional action relating to issues affecting the federal community? The NARFE Legislative Department hosted a webinar this week reviewing how upcoming budget battles and advancing postal reform legislation could impact all federal and postal employees and retirees. Make sure you know the threats facing active and retired federal employees. The hour-long webinar hosted by NARFE Deputy Legislative Director John Hatton is available [here](#) for NARFE members to view.

Make Your Voice Heard in Congress

NARFE members are encouraged to use the new, easy-to-use [NARFE Legislative Action Center](#) to send letters to members of Congress on a variety of NARFE issues, sign up for action alerts and track NARFE-related bills and votes.

NARFE INSIDER OFFICER NEWS 4/27/17

Legislative Update: Panel approves change to Postal Retiree Health Benefits

By John Hatton, Deputy Legislative Director

On March 16, the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform approved the Postal Reform Act of 2017 (H.R. 756). The bill would force 76,000 current postal retirees to enroll in Medicare Part B or lose their health insurance through the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP). The

bill also contains additional reforms aimed at improving Postal Service financing and operations. NARFE opposes the bill due to changes it would make to postal retiree health benefits.

“There are many solutions to the financial problems facing the U.S. Postal Service, all of which the Committee unfortunately has rejected in favor of balancing the books of the USPS on the backs of its retirees,” NARFE President Richard G. Thissen said in a statement to the press. “In so doing, the legislation forces 76,000 current postal retirees who are satisfied with their current health insurance coverage to pay an additional \$1,600 per year, or more, through Medicare to keep it.”

From the NARFE Legislative Department, May 11, 2017: All members of the federal community should be concerned about the Postal Service Reform Act, H.R. 756. **If passed, this bill would set a dangerous precedent of changing retiree health care benefits in retirement.** This bill is now pending before the House Committee on Ways and Means, on which your legislator sits. Click [here](#) to use NARFE’s Legislative Action Center to ask your representative to oppose requiring postal retirees to pay additional premiums in order to keep their earned retiree health benefits.

Your voice is more powerful than ever in this critical fight to prevent unfair changes to postal retiree’s benefits, which would set a terrible precedent for all federal retirees. If this bill moves forward without objection, it tells Congress that it’s okay to change someone’s benefits after they have already retired.

NARFE also has serious concerns about the perilous precedent it sets for all federal retirees.

“The committee is sending all retirees a very dangerous message with approval of this bill – we can, and will, change your retirement benefits, a after you’ve retired and are living on fixed incomes, without regard to whether or not you can afford it,” Thissen said.

At its March 16 markup, the committee approved the bill by a voice vote despite NARFE’s opposition. A few committee members expressed a desire to modify the mandatory Medicare provisions of the bill to provide a limited hardship exemption. Previous proposals to do so have been narrowly crafted, relied

on Postal Service approval and have not yet been incorporated into the bill, however.

Given the Medicare provisions, the legislation also must be approved by two other House committees before moving to the floor. Please take a moment to use the [NARFE Legislative Action Center](#) to send a message to your representative to express opposition to the bill in its current form.

Speakers Call for Activism at NARFE Legislative Training Conference

By Gary Gately, LTC Conference Summary

Lawmakers and presenters at the 2017 NARFE Legislative Training Conference in Alexandria, Virginia, advocated for grassroots activism to fight against the unprecedented threats facing federal employees and retirees.

The March 12-15 conference drew more than 300 participants, 170 of whom attended for the first time, representing 47 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

“While we have faced challenges in the past, the stars have never quite lined up in the way they do this year with a new president and a new Congress,” NARFE President Richard G. Thissen said. “Those stars are now aligned to make drastic cuts to the pay and benefits you have rightfully earned. Our success during this congressional session will depend on how much you get involved.”

The biennial NARFE conference featured advice on battling proposals that would harm federal employees and retirees. Speakers included members of Congress, key congressional aides, grassroots and budget experts, and leaders from NARFE and the Federal Managers Association.

During the conference, participants also learned about the new NARFE Legislative Action Center and gained an overview of NARFE-PAC, which they supported with an infusion of \$4,414 in one-time contributions. A total of 24 people joined the Sustainer program, giving \$322 per month, or \$7,728 over a two-year period.

NARFE has been lobbying recently against increases to current federal employees’ retirement contributions, higher premiums for the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP), devastating changes to the formula for the Thrift Savings Plan G Fund, and possible elimination of the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) for new hires. The organization also opposes the Postal

Reform Act, H.R. 756, which would force 76,000 postal retirees to enroll in Medicare — at a cost of \$1,600 apiece per year, or more, Thissen said.

One key strategy that congressional leaders may use to advance their fiscal policy agenda this year is budget reconciliation, said David Reich, a senior fellow at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Created by the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, reconciliation is a fast-track process that can be used to enact considerable budget changes. This year, reconciliation likely will be used as a deficit reduction measure by cutting programs, such as pensions for federal employees and retirees, Reich said.

Trump’s budget blueprint calls for an increase in defense spending with cuts to most federal agencies, including a 29% cut to the State Department. At the conference, 3 House Democrats – Don Beyer of Virginia and Anthony Brown and Jamie Raskin of Maryland – joined House Republicans Barbara Comstock and Rob Wittman of Virginia along with Sen. Heidi Heitkamp, D-ND, in voicing support for federal employees and opposition to cutbacks.

Rep. Derek Kilmer, D-WA, also expressed his support for federal workers and retirees during a post-conference reception. Two strong supporters of NARFE, Sen. Mark Warner, D-VA, and Rep. Gerald E. Connolly, D-VA, stopped by the reception as well. Warner did not shy away from the fights that NARFE will face.

“You’ve always had my back,” Warner said. “I’ll always have your back on pay, retirement and making sure that the bargain that was cut is honored.”

A PowerPoint presentation launched a conversation with 40 experienced and novice state advocates. Like the breakout presentations, the PowerPoint presentation was posted on our [website](#).



Hope to see you at the Baker Wetlands Wednesday, May 17, 2017, at noon for the presentation.