NASCOE Legislative Update

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Legislative Update
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Hello NASCOE Members. I first off want to Congratulate both David Wayne of Kentucky and Marcinda Kester of Florida for being named SED for their states. They will both do great for their state. NASCOE builds leaders and it's great to have State Directors hired from within the agency with strong NASCOE ties. If you have not seen the press release for the announcement of FSA State Directors please find it here Secretary Rollins Announces New State Directors for the Farm Service Agency and Rural Development | Home

Thank you, David Wayne, for all your work being our NASCOE Legislative Co-Chair. Best of luck in your new role as Kentucky State Executive Director.

Many of our members have expressed concerns regarding possible changes to our benefits. NASCOE has created a "Call to Action" for members to reach out to their Congressional members urging them to protect our Federal Benefits. What an impact we can make if each person sends this letter. Please make sure you do not do this on government time or equipment. Below you will find how to get ahold of your House of Representative and Senators.

https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative

https://www.senate.gov/senators/senators-contact.htm?OrderBy=state&Sort=ASC Simply click contact under the Senators photo and hometown info.

Feel free to take the following wording as a template to send an email or reach out.

DO NOT USE GOVERNMENT COMPUTERS OR TIME TO SUBMIT THIS

[Your Name]

[Your Address]

[City, State, ZIP Code]

[Email Address]

[Phone Number]

[Date]

Dear (Representative or Senator) [Last Name],

I am writing today on behalf of the National Association of Farm Service Agency County Office Employees. Our association represents the nearly 7,000 county-based U.S. Department of Agriculture employees who deliver farm programs directly to production agriculture. Our Farm Service Agency (FSA) county offices are the one stop shop for America's farmers and ranchers. We urge you to oppose any efforts to cut federal employee benefits as part of the budget reconciliation legislation.

FSA County Office employees work face to face with farmers, ranchers, and landowners in our communities. Maintaining pay and benefits is necessary to retain current staff and recruit future employees. We believe any reductions to salaries and benefits will result in less competitive job opportunities when compared to private sector employment.

- **Eliminating FERS Supplemental Retirement Payments**

  The FERS supplement provides crucial financial support to federal employees who retire at or after their minimum retirement age, typically 57, by filling the gap in income until they become eligible for Social Security benefits at age 62. This supplement helps ensure retirees can maintain a stable income during the transition period between their federal service and full Social Security eligibility.

- **Raising FERS Contribution Rates for all federal employees, regardless of when they joined the workforce, to 4.4 Percent.**

  The effect of raising the FERS contribution rate would amount to a 3.6% pay cut for federal employees hired before 2012 and a 1.3% pay cut for federal employees hired in 2013. These cuts add up and harm dedicated and hard-working federal employees.

- **Basing FERS Retiree Benefits on High-5 Instead of High-3 Salary**

  This proposed change would reduce the retirement annuity of federal employees, undermining the terms they agreed to when they first entered public service. Altering the conditions of retirement that were established at the outset not only disrupts long-term retirement planning but also represents an unfair breach of trust. Federal employees made career decisions based on the understanding that certain benefits would be available to them upon retirement. Shifting these terms retroactively undermines the stability and security that these workers have earned through years of service.

- **Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB)**

  Requires a comprehensive audit of employee dependents currently enrolled in FEHB plans – such as checking marriage certificates and birth certificates – and requires ineligible individuals found to be receiving FEHB coverage be disenrolled.

Federal employees have dedicated their careers to serving the American people. Often, federal employees accept modest compensation relative to the private sector. Proposals to reduce retirement benefits, increase contributions to pensions without corresponding increases in pay, or limit cost-of-living adjustments not only erode the economic security of these workers but also send a damaging message about the value placed on public service.

I respectfully ask you to oppose any such proposals and instead support a fair, sustainable budget that protects those who keep our government running. Thank you for your attention to this matter and your continued support of FSA county office employees.

Sincerely,

[First and Last Name]

Reminder: Official NASCOE communications are posted at the NASCOE APP. Please log into the NASCOE APP to activate your account and receive the latest NASCOE updates. The NASCOE APP is only available to members. If you need assistance, reach out to your Area Publicity Chair or State President for help! In addition, there is information on the NASCOE website on how to access the NASCOE APP (https://nascoe.org/)

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