

AUSWR President's Message



by *Mimi Hull*

For many of the problems facing us -- such as the recent adverse EEOC ruling or all of the retiree benefit cutbacks or the changing nature of pensions and pension stability -- they can only be redressed by Congress.

You have often heard me say, or write, how important it is for us to be active in the political process, and at no time is there a greater need than in the current election cycle.

One of the main avenues that we use, in addition to our own grassroots network, to try and have our voices heard in Washington D.C. is through our participation in the National Retiree Legislative Network (NRLN). AUSWR is a founding member of the NRLN. We have continued to help it grow and become known as a major national retiree advocacy voice.

The NRLN has recently reorganized to be more effective in their lobbying and the identification of retiree issues. Bill Kadereit is the new NRLN President.

The new NRLN organization

divides the country into regions and establishes a more accountable and effective leadership to coordinate Congressional contacts.

Of the western three of these new NRLN legislative regions that fall in the traditional 14-state serving area of U S WEST/ Qwest, three of our already very busy state organization leaders have been selected to lead the regions and build retiree legislative networks in every Congressional district, have contact with each Representative and Senator, as well as candidates for all offices.

The volunteer base that the NRLN legislative leaders will be building includes volunteer retirees from more than 20 corporations and representatives from national unions such as CWA and IBEW.

The NRLN is drafting proposals for retiree "planks" the party platform for each party.

Note how AUSWR is teaming-up with other retiree groups such as Johns-Manville, Lucent Retirees, TELCO (Pac Bell), Detroit Diesel, General Motors, etc. Three AUSWR state leaders agreed to lead the NRLN legislative activities in our 14-state area.

Read on to learn how you can be involved:

- You can be a volunteer in your Congressional District who works with other retirees to inform our legislators of issues affecting retirees --and what we want done about them. Consider calling the NRLN legislative leader in your state and ask about what is happening and how you can help.
- You can call other retirees in our organization to solicit their involvement. Phone calls are especially effective to members of Congress' offices when votes are about to take place.
- You can generously contribute money when the NRLN canvasses our members throughout the year. Remember that Corporations spend hundreds of millions of dollars lobbying Congress to do what they want them to do, not what you want them to do. The NRLN raises funds through these solicitations to lobby for you and to counteract the Corporate lobbyists.

Make certain that your Congressional Representative and Senators know what is important to you and tell them how you want them to resolve these issues!

Please help us build this very important Network!

Thank you, *Mimi Hull*
AUSWR President