



— SINCE 1937 —

National Association of Retired & Veteran Railway Employees, Inc.

NARVRE National Office
Phone Toll Free: 1-800-551-2588
6819 Crumpler Blvd, Suite 200 • Olive Branch, MS 38654-1940
Email: NARVRE@gmail.com • WEBSITE: www.narvre.us
Published ten times a year
Cost – Membership in a Unit or Membership-at-Large



— SINCE 1937 —

NARVRE NEWSLETTER

JULY, 2025

VOL. 38 NO. 6

FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT —

THE QUESTION IS WILL I GET SOME OR NOT? I'm talking about the Social Security Fairness Act (SSFA) signed by former president, Biden on January 5, 2025.

I don't profess to be an authority on any law passed by Congress, so I will only use

FROM THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR —

This year, the Trump Administration has issued many directives on policies and rules that have proven to be detrimental for many and confusing to most. Like many federal agencies, the RRB has been impacted by conflicting executive orders (EO) and the resulting actions of Elon Musk and DOGE. Slash and burn events all across the agencies have initiated the upheaval and unnecessary loss of American jobs from within the government's workforce. While the EO's do hold weight as a directive, they alone cannot change a law passed by Congress, such as The Social Security Act of 1935. Further, as the Constitution vests the president with executive power over the government, it also extends the obligation to "take care that the laws be faithfully executed". The Constitution established three branches of government: executive, legislative and judicial. As outlined, the respective duties create a separation of powers and a system of checks and balances. Under the Executive branch, the President can issue EO's, and the Judicial branch empowers the Supreme Court and lower courts to overrule an action of the President that exceeds his authority or violates the Constitutional. The legislative branch allows the Congress to control the budget, draft and amend bills, and vote on proposed laws. Every President and each member of Congress affirms their allegiance to uphold the U.S. Constitution. This

continued on page 2 →

the monthly "news" releases from the RRB. Don't use social media platforms, as there is a lot of misinformation out there. Use the RRB website (RRB.gov) and search for monthly news releases, mainly January 2025 and March 2025 (Q&A). Any questions should be referred to the RRB at 877-772-5772

"The Social Security Fairness Act and its Impact on Railroad Retirement Annuities"

"1. What is the purpose of the SSFA?"

"Beginning with the months after December 2023, the SSFA repeals earlier legislation that applied a reduction to the railroad retirement annuities or social security benefits of railroad workers, their spouses, or survivors who also receive a public service pension based on work that is not covered by social security. In addition, the SSFA removes the reduction applied to the annuities of railroad employees who also receive certain non-profit or foreign pensions."

"It is important to note that the receipt of military service pensions, payments by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and certain benefits payable by a foreign government

covered by a totalization agreement with the United States does not reduce railroad retirement annuity rates. Consequently, recipients of these payments will not see any change to their railroad retirement annuities because of the repeal of the earlier law."

"While the SSFA refers to the annuity reduction as the windfall elimination provision" (WEP) "or the government pension offset reduction" (GPO) "the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) respectively uses the terms noncovered service pension (NCSP) reduction when it is applied to a railroad retirement employee annuity or a public service pension (PSP) offset when pertains to a railroad retirement spouse or survivor annuity. While both designations cover public service pension- related deductions, NCSP reduction also includes deductions caused by certain non-profit or foreign pensions."

OK, bottom-line a few of *OUR* members may receive increases explained above, but it is *MY OPINION* that the number will be very small. *THE ANSWER IS SOME WILL AND SOME WON'T!*

— *George Boatwright, National President*



Regional 4 meeting Marceline, Mo. (L to R) Pat Hiatte Pres Unit 076 Jefferson City MO, Dennis Van Dyke Asst Area4 Director, National VP Ron Hylla, Area 6 Director Gary Marquart, National Pres George Boatwright, Richard Duley Pres Unit 165 Moberly MO, and Gary R Nelson Area 4 Director.

From the National Vice President —

We are witnessing an impressive recruitment of new NARVRE members. Since April 2025, we have added over 75 members during my visits with Jones Granger law firm. We are also seeing new members joining in Chicago, St. Paul, Duluth, Creston, Council Bluffs, Unit 801, and other areas. Railroad retirees nationwide are aware and concerned of potential changes in Washington D.C. that could impact them. All NARVRE members should encourage both retired and active railroaders to join. Let's contribute to this effort to sign them up.

Your Executive Officers continue to review the rosters for each unit. Many units have reached my threshold of having a 90% membership renewal rate and I personally thank you. Meanwhile, while we are recruiting new members, we find many NARVRE members failing to renew their memberships. It is up to every unit and its officers to review their rosters to have these delinquent members pay their 2025 dues. Area Directors, as part of your responsibility is to maintain contact with unit officers in your area who have members with unpaid dues for 2025. Area Directors should work with these units to assist them with membership renewals.

In July 2025, I will visit Kalispell MT, Missoula MT, and Pocatello ID for new member/new unit recruitment. Below are the meeting locations, dates, and times for NARVRE members, who are encouraged to attend and to bring non-members to join NARVRE. Jeff Doerr from Jones Granger law firm, Gary Nelson (Area 4 Director), and Bob Boltz (Area 7 Director) will also

attend. Jeff Doerr will discuss the asbestos trust fund available for railroad retirees.

City – Date – Time - Location

Kalispell, MT, Tuesday, July 15, at 11:00 AM, at Brannigans Irish Pub, 101 E. Center St. Missoula, MT, Wednesday, July 16, at 11:00 AM, at Fraternal Order of Eagles, 2420 South Ave W.

Pocatello, ID, Thursday, July 17, at 11:00 AM, at Pocatello Labor Temple, 456 N. Arthur Ave.

Several NARVRE Officers attended the

Marceline Regional Informational Conference on June 4, 2025. It was gratifying to see many attendees, including Rich Duley and his wife from Unit 165 (Moberly, MO), Alda Evens from Unit 140 (Topeka, KS), Dan and Shari Miller from Unit 095 (Kansas City, MO), Area 6 Director Gary Marquart, and Area 4 Director Gary Nelson. We extend special thanks to Dennis VanDyke for organizing the conference.

— Ron Hylla

NARVRE National Vice President

(National Legislative Director from page 1)

space has previously reported on the Trump EO's that have been challenged, or currently under review by the courts. All constituents and voters should keep 2025 actions in mind when considering members of Congress in the 2026 elections.

Since the advent of the 2025 Trump Administration, the RRB has been placed in a precarious situation by new EO's that proposed to close or move its' offices, while cutting jobs and buying out employees. For no sound reason the RRB received confusing directives that would only add to an already understaffed workforce, due to Congress repeatedly under-funding the agency's fiscal budgets since 2012. RRB fiscal year requests for increased funding (backed by justification reports) have continually been ignored as RRB employment dropped by nearly 25%, from 884 in 2012 to about 667 today. The president and DOGE issued an across the board hiring freeze on federal agencies, even though the RRB had their own self-imposed limitations already in place. Had they acted with serious interest and examined the facts, they would have realized the predicament at the RRB was caused by Congress and the

government they now represent. Across the spectrum of government offices, DOGE has been an irresponsible experiment that continues to fail the country. Railway Age's Frank Wilner has recently written an in-depth article on the RRB ("Don't Tread on Me"), in which he carefully details the facts, while exposing the government's culpability over the years. On June 6th, your legislative office emailed Mr. Wilner's article to those of you on our legislative lists. His research and account of the RRB's plight will serve as a fact-filled referral for our use when contacting our Representatives in the House & Senate. Due to the current situation and the lack of resources from the continual ignorance of Congress, NARVRE members must re-commit to speak out on behalf of the RRB. In order to prepare a concise message for our elected officials, we should read through the "Don't Tread on Me" article. It's a well-written reminder of pertinent facts and history that Congress needs to understand in order to address the current situation at the RRB. NARVRE members will be asking Congress to stop penalizing and interfering with the RRB's ability to serve its railroad retirement beneficiaries. They need to know the RRB must have adequate funding, appropriated with revenue from railroad

continued on page 3 →

Thank you!

We would like to thank all who made donations, both large and small. Your contributions are important to advancing the organizational goals of NARVRE.

Jones and Granger Law Firm • TLC Insurance Group • Randall Stark • Victor Sundquist • Barbara Sundquist • Richard Bernhardt • Brian Bell • David Corless

Memorials

Brenda C Beal • Larry Skaalerud • Silas Philmore Kelley • Amy Almgren • Betty Brandl • Janet Kahle • James Lawton III • Lawrence Patterson • Robert & Judy Hall



Nat'l President George Boatwright with NARVRE members in Marceline, MO Regional Meeting.

From the National Secretary-Treasurer —

The following was issued by Rainmaker Networks, the firm which is our database programmers and provides the data security system and firewall which protects NARVRE'S database and communications from being hacked or compromised.

“We would like to remind everyone of an important security best practice to help stay safe from potential cyber threats. Recently, we've seen a significant increase in emails containing malicious links and attachments. When these links or attachments are clicked, they can run harmful programs in the background, giving hackers unrestricted access to the user's PC, including files and sensitive features like webcams and microphones. Once one PC is compromised, it's easy for the infection to spread to other computers on the network.

The most effective way to protect yourself and the organization is by being cautious with any emailed link or attachment. Do not trust links or attachments unless you are expecting them. If you're ever unsure about an email, especially if it includes unexpected attachments or links, it is always best to call the sender directly to verify.

Even emails from colleagues or people you know can be compromised, as hackers can hijack infected accounts and send these malicious emails to everyone in their contact list. So, it's always safer to double-check before clicking on anything unexpected. “

As a reminder we will continue to issue email alerts as circumstances require to all members with email addresses whether you receive the newsletter via USPS or not. For additional and more detailed information visit our website www.narvre.us and join our Facebook pages NARVRE and National NARVRE Forum.

As we published last month the total number of Units which have renewed all active members and have 0 delinquencies on their roster, we are recognizing are the following six Presidents and Treasures for their outstanding accomplishments

- 034 Denver Co Pres Josephine Ziska Treasurer Raymond Durbola
- 048 Sun City AZ Pres Joseph Baca Sec/Treas Richard & Ivanna Jaramillo
- 081 Spokane WA Pres Don Kane Treas Cláudia Rohlinger
- 107 St Cloud MN – President Duane Tadych Treas Cheri Hylla
- 123 Fargo ND- Marv Boser

- 187 Houston TX – Pres Dennis Taylor Treas Pam Sackett Recognizing Units with !% - 20% Delinquencies
- 148 Parsons KS 1 % Pres Charles Wells co Treasurer Marilyn Horton and Ruth Farrell
- 151 East Liverpool OH 5% Pres Randall Saracco Treas Sec/Treas Lee Powell
- 144 Lorain OH 6% Pres James Blum Treas Keith Castor
- 017 Navarre OH 6% Pres Robert Miller Sec/Treas Lisa Conley
- 020 Columbus OH 6% Pres Richard Wallace III Treas John Serio
- 059 Boone, IA 7% Pres Steven Bovenmyer Sec/Treas Janet L Schultz
- 166 Springfield, MO 7% Pres Victor Sirna Treas John & Marcia Ratcliff
- 082 Nampa, ID 8% Pres Ted & Sherry Zahradnicek Treas Cheryl Lopez
- 053 Syracuse, NY 8% Pres John Schuyler Treas John Kane
- 153 Ft Madison, IA 9% Pres Sec/Treas Stanley & Jane Haessig
- 104 Dennison, IA 9% Pres John O'Hara Treas Tim Hicks
- 154 Marceline, MO 11% Pres Jackie Ray White Sec/Treas Nancy Schreiner
- 002 Chicago IL 12% Pres Tim Baker Sec/

- Treas Jose Garza
- 140 Topeka KS 12% Pres Jim Brewer Sec/Treas Alda Evans
- 165 Moberly MO 13% Pres Richard Duley Treas Cecil Elliott
- 130 Roanoke VA 14% Pres Ken Brown Treas Sylvia Long
- 089 La Grande OR 14% Pres Larry Romine Sec/Treas Billie Halliday
- 067 Clinton IA 15% Pres Steven Hoogheem Sec/Treas Janell Hughes
- 171 Michigan City IN 16% Pres & Treas Mark P Schiesser
- 095 Kansas City MO 16% Pres Michael Steward Treas Florence Thexton
- 093 Shawnee OK 16% Pres John Permetter Sec Treas David & Virginia Kubiak
- 074 Auburn WA 16% Pres Donald Reiling Sec/Treas Katherine Shaben
- 163 San Antonio TX 18% Pres Robert Moore III Sec/Treas Sergio X Perez Sr
- 014 North Platte NE 20% Pres William Smith Treas Mick Jesse

Thanks for your great work!

Due to lack of print space we will publish the Ohio State Association photos taken at Cleveland OH in our August 2025 issue.

— **James (Phil) Steward,**
National Secretary/Treasurer

(National Legislative Director from page 2)

trust funds, all prepaid by rail employees and employers, and not from the U.S. Treasury.

We were aware that insufficient funding slowed hiring in FY24, but in addition to the budget, the RRB cannot back-fill positions due to the EO hiring freeze that mandates they only hire 1 new employee for every 4 that leave. The RRB did seek an exemption from this broad and ill-advised order, but the request was denied, saying it may be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Field Service update - with the phone system's call-back option,

and routing by subject area - now maintaining an average wait time of 4 minutes for calls. But budget constraints have meant they only served 3,800 people at 44 events this fiscal year down from 4,800 people at 95 events last fiscal year. Moving forward, we'll soon be discussing FY26 options and plans with RRB colleagues on educating our Representatives and eventually develop a summary of bullet points for our use. If needed, we can email or mail you a copy of the Wilner article. We will also have it posted on our website (www.narvre.us).

— **Gary Faley,**
National Legislative Director



Assistant Area 3 Director and Unit 32 President Joe Patriarka.



Asst Area 3 Director Dan Lauzon and Area 3 Director Adrienne Natoli.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NARVRE NEWSLETTER

Volume 38 Number 6

National President
George Boatwright
2806 Pebble Beach Drive
Elkton, MD 21921
386-589-6777
amboat49@hotmail.com

National Vice President
Ron Hylla
39594 125th Avenue
Holdingford, MN. 56340
320-492-6411
320-363-4346
rsimba@aol.com

National Secretary-Treasurer
James (Phil) Steward
6819 Crumpler Blvd, Ste 200
Olive Branch, MS 38654-1940
1-800-551-2588
narvre@gmail.com

National Legislative Director
Gary M Faley
6324 Calkins Road
Flint, MI 48532-3207
810-733-7256
faleyg@comcast.net

Granting Access to Your Private Health Information

One of the most important things you can do when you are well is to plan ahead for when you are not. That can include setting up who can access your private health care information. This person (or persons, depending on how you decide to grant access) may need to handle bills, appeals, or ask questions on your behalf when you are unable to do so. If someone else calls on your behalf without you there at that time, we will not be able to share any specific information about your benefits with them.

When it comes to Railroad Medicare, granting access is an easy process that you can do three different ways. They are:

1. Over the phone
2. In writing by mail/fax
3. Through our online portal, MyRRMed

For Option 1, you would start by calling our office at 800-833-4455 and providing us with your full name, date of birth, Medicare number, and telephone number. You will also need to identify the person you want to authorize. We will ask you to provide the person's first and last name, their relationship to you, and their full address. You can authorize the person to receive any information or specify the type of information they may receive. You can give verbal/over the phone permission for a specific amount of time or until further notice.

Option 2 is giving permission in writing. Written permission requires the following:

- * Your full name, Medicare Number, date of birth, telephone number and address
- * The name, address and relationship of

the person or group to whom information can be given.

- * The types of information that can be released (any information or limited information, ex. only information about your Medicare claims)

- * The length of the authorization (ongoing, specific date range or one-time only)

- * Your signature and date you signed your name

To make sending written permission easy, you can use our Railroad Medicare Beneficiary Authorization Form, which can be found on the Forms page of our website at www.PalmettoGBA.com/RR/Me. This form has fields that allow you to include all the required information so you don't have to worry about missing any needed data.

Option 3 is submitting the request through our free online portal MyRRMed, also makes it easy to complete this task. First, you will need to log into your MyRRMed account at www.PalmettoGBA.com/MyRRMed. After logging into your account, open the View Your Authorized Representatives page and choose Add a New Representative Online. Complete the required fields to let us know who you are authorizing, the length of the authorization and the type of information you want Railroad Medicare to disclose. After completing the required fields, click the Add Representative button to submit your request. This action will submit your online form to Railroad Medicare, then take you back to the previous page. Please allow 45 business days for processing.

Note: You have the right to take back

("revoke") your authorization at any time, in writing, except to the extent that Railroad Medicare has already acted based on your permission. To revoke authorization, send a written request to the address below. You can also revoke authorization in your MyRRMed account by choosing the Remove action on the View Your Authorized Representatives page. Your authorization or refusal to authorize disclosure of your personal health information will have no effect on your enrollment, eligibility for benefits, or the amount Medicare pays for the health services you receive.

Palmetto GBA - Railroad Medicare
P.O. Box 10066
Augusta, GA 30999

If you have questions about any of these options please call our Beneficiary Contact Center at 800-833-4455, or for the hearing impaired, call TTY/TDD at 877-566-3572. Our Customer Service Representatives are available from Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Eastern Time. You can also visit our Facebook page at www.Facebook.com/MyRRMedicare.

Setting up or changing people you want to access your health care information in advance is something you want to handle when you are well so that you don't need to worry about it when you are sick. Please take a moment to consider this. It can save you stress in the long run.

— Jennifer Johnson
Palmetto, GBA