

Warm Greetings Fellow DEAR Retirees,

I hope you are all enjoying a Happy and Healthy New Year!

Although it is only early February, the winter seems long to me as I sit here in Michigan. Between this week's snow and our continuing battle with Covid protocols, I have severe cabin fever. That said, it gives us all plenty of time to enjoy indoor pleasures like reading, puzzles, and in my case, stitching.

Your Board met by Zoom on February 2nd and after much discussion decided to continue planning for our Annual Meeting on Wednesday, May 18, 2022. We plan on meeting at the Ukrainian Cultural Center as we are accustomed. Although we did not get a large response to our survey, 65% of respondents said they would be willing to attend an inperson annual meeting. We will, of course, be following Covid protocols with additional spacing between tables, fewer people sitting at a table, and any venue protocols in place at the time. More details are elsewhere in this newsletter.

For now, while I am not especially busy with DEAR/DTE issues, I have been very busy with NRLN business as much is happening, or not as the case may be, in our Capital. As you know, NRLN has been lobbying for legislation that would safeguard pensions for its member companies and in doing so also protect many other retirees.

The Senate bill introduced by Senator Robert Portman of Ohio that has provisions addressing the problem of Recoupment of pensions (where a Company can seek to retrieve funds from a Retiree for pension overpayment although it was caused by the company's mistake in calculation) is seeing some action. After many years of lobbying, this bill is expected to pass later this year.

Another big issue NRLN is working on is Pension De-Risking. When companies decide to annuitize their pension funds with an insurance company, the pension loses the protection of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation Board (PBGC). These protections are very important to us as retirees. NRLN is working with the Pension Rights Center and proposing that the insurance companies taking over pensions be required to have reinsurance to protect the pension fund. The hope is that we see legislation addressing this issue get traction in 2022 as well.

The new NRLN website has gone live and is much easier to read and navigate. I encourage each of you to peruse the website for news on all the pending legislation NRLN is following regarding pension issues, and Medicare and Social Security. The new website includes a few podcasts from President Bill Kadereit on the various issues that we as retirees should continue to monitor. The website also provides a way for retirees to sign up for action alerts on the bills that you are most interested in.

I hope you enjoy a healthy remainder of this winter and look forward to seeing you at the Annual Meeting.



Janet Seefried, President



Important Dates for Your Calendars

- ◆ Thursday May 5th– The DTE Shareholder Annual Meeting
- ◆ DEAR Annual Meeting is planned for Wednesday May 18th

DEAR Board of Directors

Bob Barrette ◆ Jan DeRyckere ◆ Charlotte "Charlie" Mahoney ◆ Karen Mitchell ◆ Cindy Persitz ◆ Janet Seefried
Donna Simpson-Long ◆ Ray Sturdy ◆ Cheryl VanVliet ◆ Kathy Williams ◆ Gerald Winkler

DEAR FACT:

The DEAR Newsletter goes to over 8900 retirees.
In 2021 we received donations from approximately
6% of our retirees.
Retiree support is important.
On behalf of all retirees

THANK YOU.

Mail your **DONATION payable to DEAR**
to Robert Barrette

58 Greenbriar Lane, Grosse Pointe Shores, MI 48236

A Note From DEAR Treasurer

Bob Barrette, Jr.

The early part of 2022 brings on new hope that COVID-19 and all of its followers are moving to their end. DEAR has continued working for retirees during these very challenging times and as our President mentioned in her letter, we have been fortunate not to have any glaring issues on the home front. ZOOM has become a great means for us to communicate as a board and with our DTE contacts. We hope that sometime in

the future we will be able to return to Washington, D.C. to continue DEAR's work with NRLN to support retirees as our DC leadership works toward future options in the Medicare, Social Security and Pension arenas. We will continue to stay connected with DTE on the home front and support NRLN efforts from afar until we return in person to meet with our local and federal elected officials. I hope you all have a safe and great New Year and a good winter here in Michigan, or in the sun where you live or enjoy a winter retreat. Thanks for your financial support-- it's much needed to get our messages to the elected officials.

SEE YOU IN MAY

!! Make your Reservation!!

DEAR Annual Meeting

Wednesday, May 18, 2022

All retirees, their spouses and surviving spouses are welcome

Ukrainian Cultural Center - 26601 Ryan Road - Warren, MI 48091

The Center is located on the West side of Ryan Road just south of I-696

Doors open at 9:30AM - business meeting at 11:00AM - Lunch at 11:45AM

A nominal charge of **\$15.00 per person** collected at the door. Exact payment appreciated.

Reservations for lunch are required, and must be made by Wednesday, May 11, 2022

RSVP by phone or email to:

Bob Barrette 313 882-6128; Charlie Mahoney 248 474-0905; Kathy Williams 248 464-9910
or kakjwilliams1974@gmail.com; or mahoneyc@prodigy.net

We are so excited to see you all again; and we have two requests as you make your reservations:

1. Please provide an email or phone contact with your reservation in the event we need to cancel
2. Should your plans change and you need to cancel, please notify us as soon as you know so we can adjust the food order

Note: The Ukrainian Hall will have tables for 6 appropriately spaced for the health and safety of the attendees. Health and safety requirements dictated by CDC, state and local guidelines and venue protocols at the time of our Annual Meeting will be applied. As of now masking for those fully vaccinated is a personal choice; and, we ask that you not attend if you are feeling poorly or have tested positive for COVID within 10 days of the luncheon.

“By Retirees for Retirees”



WHAT IS HAPPENING IN WASHINGTON D.C. – NRLN News and Views

The mission of the NRLN is to develop, identify and rally support for federal legislation that guarantees fair and equitable treatment of retirees and future retirees. We work to protect earned employer-sponsored pensions and benefit plans and Medicare and Social Security. DEAR is a member of NRLN and DEAR has had a seat on the NRLN Board and our President currently serves as the NRLN Treasurer. NRLN is our connection to the ‘happenings or not’ in our Capital. Much of the current focus on healthcare, social security and pensions are extremely impactful on the future of retirees – thus the importance of our partnership and involvement.

We thought you might be interested in the legislative priorities for the NRLN. For 2022 these priorities are divided into two sections -- income security and healthcare. The top two categories for these priorities are outlined below.

◆ **Income Security:**

1. **Pension De-Risking:** currently when companies offload their pension funds to insurance companies there is no requirement that the insurance company has "reinsurance" for the money they take into their charge. Corporate Pension Funds are protected by the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation Board (PBGC). Once a pension fund is turned over to an insurance company it no longer is protected by the PBGC putting retirees' pension benefits at risk. NRLN is seeking legislation requiring companies to seek reinsurance and/or change the PBGC to require pension protection even if the fund is turned over to an insurance company.

2. **Pensions in Mergers and Acquisitions:** NRLN is continuing to seek protection for pension funds during mergers and acquisitions. Again, to prevent retirees from losing pension benefits.

◆ **Healthcare:**

1. **Direct Contracting of Medicare:** This topic is not easily understood – Traditional Medicare is our nation's most important and popular health care program; it has proven its value for more than half a century as a lifeline for America's seniors and younger adults living with disabilities. In simple words **Direct Contracting** is an attempt to privatize Medicare services to provide large revenue streams for private insurance companies at the expense of healthcare services to those in the Medicare system. NRLN has announced its opposition to the CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid) Direct Contracting program's threat to Medicare. More than 8,700 letters to President Biden and members of Congress were gathered via NRLN Action Alerts and emails to urge the President and Congress to stop this dangerous CMS action to destroy Medicare. Instead NRLN is calling on Congress to strengthen Traditional Medicare by improving its benefits, eliminating costs for beneficiaries, and expanding it to cover everyone in the US. You can read more on Direct Contracting vs Traditional Medicare on the NRLN website NRLN.org.

2. **Prescription Drug Bills:** – For several years NRLN has been supporting many bills addressing ways to reduce the cost of drugs for seniors and all purchasers. One of these bills which would enable Medicare to negotiate drug prices seems likely to pass this year. NRLN will continue to follow this issue.

REMINDERS

DEAR DONATIONS *payable to DEAR* to Robert Barrette, 58 Greenbriar Lane, Grosse Pointe Shores, MI 48236 barretterh@comcast.net

U.S. MAIL/E-MAIL NEW/CHANGES to Charlie Mahoney, 18633 Williams Ct., Livonia, MI 48152 mahoneyc@prodigy.net

COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS to Janet Seefried, 3000 E. 13 Mile Road, Warren, MI 48092 seefriedj@gmail.com

HELP WANTED – RETIREE READERSHIP! – DEAR is interested in reaching as many DTE retirees as possible with our newsletter. We need help in getting mailing addresses for retirees. Please share your newsletter with retirees you know – especially those joining us after 2005. If they would like to receive their own copy, encourage them to send their U.S. Mailing address and e-mail address in an email to: mahoneyc@prodigy.net or in a postcard or note via US Mail to:
DEAR c/o Charlie Mahoney 18633 Williams Ct. Livonia MI 48152. Your assistance in this important matter is appreciated.

OTHER RESOURCES

Alliance for Retired Americans	On-line www.retiredamericans.org
American Association of Retired Persons	On-line www.aarp.org
American 1 Credit Union	On-line www.american1cu.org or phone 1.888.213.2848
DEAR	On-line www.dearalliance.org
Humana Managed Care	On-line www.humana.com or phone 1.800.824.8242
Lake Trust Credit Union	On-line www.laketrust.org or phone 1.888.267.7200
Local 17	On-line www.ibewlocal17.org or phone 1.248.423.4540 ext 110
Local 223	On-line www.local223uwua.org or phone 1.313.271.9700
Medicare	On-line www.medicare.gov
National Retiree Legislative Network (NRLN)	On-line www.nrln.org
National Healthcare Changes	On-line www.healthcare.gov
PayFlex	On-line retiree.payflexdirect.com or phone 1.855.652.0112
RHA Exchange (eHealth)	On-line www.rhaexchange.com/dte or phone 1.844.866.8257
Your Benefit Resources - Alight	On-line www.ybr.com/dteenergy or phone 1.866.899.4DTE (4383)

DEAR

Detroit Edison/MichCon Alliance of Retirees

18633 Williams Ct.
Livonia, MI 48152-2887