

October 2021

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1. Update from Capitol Hill. As Congress returns from their summer recess, there is a lot on the legislative agenda. Here are some highlights to watch:

- a. In August, the Senate passed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, providing \$1 trillion for roads, bridges, rail, transit, water and other “physical infrastructure” programs. It now heads to the House. The Senate also passed the \$3.5 trillion budget framework (“human infrastructure”). This “human infrastructure” bill would finance many NEA priorities such as modernizing school facilities, providing free school meals for all students and retaining a diverse educator workforce. FEA-Retired is watching the “human infrastructure” bill as it recommends adding vision, dental and hearing benefits to Medicare, calls for lowering prescription drug prices and offers a blueprint to investing in home and community based services for seniors, the disabled and home care workers. The future of these two infrastructure bills, as of this date, is uncertain. FEA/NEA will continue to monitor these bills.
- b. Also in August, the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee advanced the NEA-Supported Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (S. 1486). The bill (which has already passed the House) would help end pregnancy discrimination and promote healthy pregnancies by requiring employers to make reasonable accommodations for pregnant workers.
- c. Representative John Larson (D-CT) plans to reintroduce his Social Security 2100 Act. This will increase benefits across the board for Social Security beneficiaries, improve the Cost-of-Living adjustments, repeal GPO/WEP, increase benefits for those receiving benefits for 20 years or more, and permanently improve the long-term financing of social security.

2. Post cards to voters. As educators and federal employees, we all know the importance of elections and the impact elected officials can have on our lives. Want to get involved in supporting candidates who support public education? Here is an easy, contact free way to get involved. Go to www.postcardstovoters.org and sign up to write postcards to remind voters of upcoming elections and important issues. It's easy. They will provide a short message and the addresses. You purchase the postcards and stamps, and you can write them out and address them from the comfort of your home! An easy way to encourage voting in important mid-term elections

3. Give to the Combined Federal Campaign. Federal retirees may continue to give back to their community, country, and people around the world, through the CFC. Just visit

www.GiveCFC.org Here you can choose the cause(s) you wish to support, make a pledge and easily renew annually. This was always an important part of many of our members' charitable donations when they were active employees—and the giving can continue as a retiree.

4. Debt Collectors on Line 1. As reported last February, a new rule put in place by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau last year will allow Debt Collectors to use phone calls, emails, text messaging and social media messaging. They will be allowed to make up to 7 calls per week (more for multiple debts) and send unlimited electronic collection messages. Debt collectors will not be required to verify that the money in question is still owed. This is to become effective November, 2021, if the CFPB does not take action. Let your Congressional representative/Senators know how you feel.

5. Flu shot? Experts expect the flu will make a comeback this winter. Older adults should seek out the flu shot that provides better protection for the elderly. (If those shots for older adults are not available, a standard flu-shot is better than none at all.) The flu vaccine effectiveness wanes over time, so it is usually recommended to get the shot in September/October.

6. Where there's a will--- Legal experts advise that one reviews his/her will every 5 to 10 years (or more often if there are life-changing events). So after you have reviewed, revised or written your will—what should you remember to tell your future executor? AARP recommends that your chosen executor be told 1) where the original will is located, 2) whom should be notified upon your death, 3) your passwords to access necessary information and 4) who gets what for nonfinancial items.

7. Don't forget to do your chores. According to BMC Geriatrics, older adults who spent more time engaged in household chores had larger hippocampus and frontal lobes in the brain. Those brain areas are involved with memory, learning and thinking skills. Researchers suspect that taking care of a home, yard and family may improve both the brain and cardiovascular health.
