



AT&T Ameritech /SBC Retirees – We are AASBCR®

Proudly working on behalf of the Bell System and successor companies of the New AT&T, located throughout the World

Legislative Ledger

May 14, 2010

NRLN – What Have You Done for Us Lately? (2nd in a series)

This Legislative Ledger provides some insights into the complexities of lobbying Congress and what the NRLN and AASBCR® retirees are up against.

Lobbying is complex and Congress is an intricate maze which must be carefully navigated.

- **The House of Representatives is made up of 435 elected members, divided among the 50 states in proportion to their total population.**
- **The Senate is composed of 100 Senators, 2 for each state.**
- **The first step in the legislative process is the introduction of a bill to Congress. Anyone can write it, but only members of Congress can introduce legislation.**
- **After being introduced, a bill is referred to the appropriate committee for review. Currently, there are 17 Senate committees, with 70 subcommittees, and 23 House committees, with 104 subcommittees. The committees are not set in stone, and change in number and form with each new Congress. Each committee oversees a specific policy area, and the subcommittees take on more specialized policy areas**
- **Sub-committees have to coordinate legislative changes across the various committees/sub-committees which takes a great deal of time and effort.**

Congress is a very big organization with a lot of people and complicated processes and procedures involved in making legislation. In addition to the complexity, the NRLN must operate within the following parameters:

- **There are over 30,000 registered lobbyists in DC.**



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- **The NRLN has only one full-time registered lobbyist and one part-time lobbyist/attorney working the issues, meeting with members of the House and Senate and their respective staffs and various committee/sub-committees and staffs.**
- **The NRLN attorney writes most of the NRLN position papers and provides input to various committees/sub-committees in legal legislative language.**
- **Retiree issues account for only a portion of the things that Congress might take action on and quite frankly retiree issues aren't always high on Congress' things to do list.**

Why aren't retiree concerns high on Congress' list of things to do/reform?

First, Congress has what they believe to be higher priorities such as the Budget, War, Financial Reform, Immigration and, most recently, Healthcare Reform.

Many retirees have yet to be impacted negatively with respect to healthcare or pension benefits and therefore may be somewhat complacent unlike retirees from Qwest, GM, Chrysler, John Deere and other companies. Members of Congress primarily hear from paid lobbyists as to what is fair for retirees, rather than retirees who have been or could be affected by changes to their pension and healthcare benefits.

So what can we do? We can help the NRLN be more effective. We can act on the Capwiz alerts that the NRLN sends us. They arrive periodically via e-mail. It's an organized way to contact our representatives and Senators, and let them know that we support the NRLN Legislative Agenda and as retirees we'd like to see Congress address the issues outlined in it. Help the NRLN help us.