
August 2024

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1. Action Needed to Stop Vouchers in DoDEA Schools Overseas. In the 2025 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) is a provision that would allow the use of “vouchers” to take U.S. tax dollars away from DoDEA schools and allow them to be spent in private schools in Bahrain. A voucher-like program in DoDEA Bahrain would rob schools of resources and students of First Amendment, due process, and other constitutional and statutory rights. Moreover, the absence of accountability invites fraud and abuse—especially when funds would go to schools or institutions outside the purview of the United States, as they would in Bahrain. To let Congress know how we feel, we encourage all our members to visit [Do NOT divert taxpayer dollars to international schools in Bahrain | NEA](#) Within a few seconds and key strokes, we can get this language removed from the 2025 NDAA

2. Ingrid Ahlberg, FEA-R Envoy, Represents the Association This Summer. Ingrid Ahlberg was able to attend the FEA Annual Meeting, the NEA Representative Assembly and the DoDDS reunion. She was impressed with how FEA/NEA was able to use technology prior to the meetings to keep delegates and members informed on the issues of the budget, artificial intelligence and mentoring aspiring educators. Connecting with retirees from across the US, helped Ingrid realize that the fight for quality education for every student is a never ending battle that we must win.

3. Defense Health Agency (DHA) Hits Members with Debt Collection Actions. A number of educators have reported that the Defense Health Agency (with DoD) has issued a number of collection notices to our members, providing very little information on the alleged debt, but proceeded with collection tactics all the same. If you have experienced similar actions from DHA, please let us know and what steps were taken to rectify the situation. retiredfea@gmail.com

4. Are you going into Retirement with Student Loans? More than 3.5 million Americans over 60 owe more than \$125 billion in student loan debt. Many now face retirement with less money than those who did not have to borrow. NEA Member Benefits has teamed up with Savi to give our members the tools to navigate the red tape to determine which student loan forgiveness programs and repayment plans you may qualify for and help our members save the most money. Visit www.neamb.com and then search “Savi.”

5. Election Issues that Can Affect Your Retirement Entitlements. The Republican Study Committee has unveiled its fiscal 2025 budget plan on how it intends to balance the budget in 7 years by slashing \$17 trillion in spending. This would be accomplished by significantly reducing federal workers’ retirement and health care benefits. The proposals would reduce or eliminate cost-of-living adjustments for Federal Employee Retirement System and Civil Service Retirement System annuitants and computing retirement benefits based on the highest 5 years of salary (instead of the high-3). It would also require retirees to pay a more significant share of their federal health benefit premiums (National Active and Retired Federal Employees magazine, August 2024). Be sure to ask your political candidates where they stand on protecting entitlements for Federal employee retirees.

6. Voter Scams—Be on the Lookout. Scams are an everyday occurrence for retirees, and an election year provides more opportunities unscrupulous individuals to steal your money. AARP recommends that you do not donate to groups that contact you for “contributions.” One should go directly to the candidates’ or campaign sites to give money. Scammers want you to use PayPal, checks and even gift cards—all of which are “red flags.” Be very careful when responding to “pollsters” over the phone. If they offer gifts to participate, they are probably a scam. Never give out any personal, identifying information to an unknown person. Remember you can’t register to vote by phone, so when questioned about your voter registration (by phone or email), hang up and contact your secretary of state or board of elections for your state, when in doubt about your voter’s registration.
