

The National Council of Social Security Management Associations, Inc.

**THE WASHINGTON REPORT
LEGISLATIVE REPORT 08-2000**

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- **Federal Overview**

Congress is currently in recess, with the Senate scheduled to return to Washington on April 25th and the House on May 1st. Most Members of Congress will be spending some of this time in their home Districts and States. This is an excellent time to meet with your representatives to discuss some of the legislative issues of interest to the NCSSMA. Please contact either Rachel or Sara if you need information to prepare for your meetings.

- **Testimony before the House Subcommittee on Social Security**

Steve Korn presented testimony (attached) to the House Subcommittee on Social Security on March 16th. Steve's testimony focused on the effects of SSA staff reductions on the ability of the field offices to deliver agency services. He also stressed the need for an infusion of funding for staff resources in Fiscal Year 2001, at least at the level recommended by Commissioner Apfel.

- **Supervisory Overtime Pay**

There are bills in both the House (H.R. 2696) and Senate (S. 1885) to provide overtime equity in the federal workplace. Both bills would increase the overtime cap for managers and supervisors to GS-12, step 1 and ensure that no one is paid less for overtime work than their regular rate of pay. H.R. 2696 was introduced by Rep. Tom Davis (R-VA) and currently has four cosponsors: Rep. Neil Abercrombie (D-HI); Rep. Benjamin A. Gilman (R-NY); Rep. Maurice D. Hinchey (D-NY); and Rep. Walter B. Jones, Jr. (R-NC). S. 1885 was introduced by Sen. Charles S. Robb (D-VA) and currently has two cosponsors: Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski (D-MD) and Sen. Paul S. Sarbanes (D-MD).

- **Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act of 2000**

On April 7th, the President signed the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act of 2000. The legislation was passed unanimously by both the House and the Senate. The bill allows full Social Security benefits for people who keep working beyond the normal retirement age, and is effective as of January 1, 2000. Eligible beneficiaries will receive retroactive payments in May and regular monthly benefits beginning in June.

- **FY2001 Budget Resolution**

Before departing for its Spring recess, Congress passed its Fiscal Year 2001 Budget Resolution. The Budget Resolution provides funding recommendations for the appropriations bills which will begin to be considered in the next month or so. Several senior Republicans on the Appropriations Committees have already expressed concern that the Budget Resolution is unrealistic and would require funding reductions in ongoing programs. It now seems that we may see a repeat of last year's appropriations process where a high degree of creativity such as advanced funding was employed to ensure that programs were adequately funded within the constraints set both by the 1997 Budget Agreement and the Fiscal Year 2001 Budget Resolution.

- **Free Home Computers for Federal Government Employees**

Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-MD) has introduced the Federal Workforce Digital Access Act (H.R. 4232). The legislation would give all federal government employees who have been employed at least one year a personal computer for use at home. Employees of the executive, judicial and legislative branches would also receive free Internet access. The purpose of the legislation is to help lay the foundation for "e-government" by increasing the number of technologically competent government employees. Under the bill, the program's costs would be handled by each agency with GSA and OPM overseeing the program, negotiating computer purchases, and providing Internet training to workers. The program is modeled along the lines of programs recently introduced in the private sector by companies including Ford Motor and Delta Airlines, and is estimated to cost approximately \$800 per worker.

- **Long -Term Care Insurance**

On March 30th, the Long-Term Care Security Act (H.R. 4040) was passed by the House Government Reform Committee. The legislation was introduced by House Civil Service Subcommittee Chair Joe Scarborough (R-Fla.), and establishes a program under which long-term care insurance is made available to federal employees, members of the uniformed services and civilian and military retirees. OPM would contract with insurance companies for group rates. The legislation currently has 24 cosponsors and has been referred to the full House.

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