Political Coordinator Conference Call Summary
March 2018

Federal Legislative Updates

Pension

February 9th, Congress passed the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (BBA) which created a Joint Select Committee (JSC) with specific deadlines to address the insolvency issue of critical and declining multiemployer pension plans and to address the PBGC insolvency issue. The JSC must take certain actions by dates certain. These will be outlined in a summary of the JSC that you will receive. House and Senate party leaders were tasked with appointing four members each from their party. Since our last call, the following Members have been appointed:


Sen. Orrin Hatch and Sen. Sherrod Brown will co-chair the Committee.

The BBA calls for a minimum of 5 meetings or hearings with at least 3 hearings. Per the BBA, the Joint Select Committee will hold its first meeting in Washington, D.C., tomorrow, Wednesday, March 14 at 10:00 a.m. The first meeting (an executive committee meeting) will be an organizational meeting. Since this is an executive committee meeting, the JSC will not be taking testimony. The meeting is expected to be webcast.

The date, time and location of each hearing/meeting must be noticed seven days in advance. The co-chairs of the committee can select an equal number of witnesses for each hearing.

No later than November 30, 2018, the Joint Select Committee must vote on a report containing findings, conclusions, recommendations and legislation to support the recommendations. To move out of the Committee, the legislation must be approved by at least five Republican and five Democratic members of the Committee.

The BBA provides for "expedited" consideration procedures in the Senate. In the House, any legislation will be considered and voted upon under normal procedures.

The Senate must vote on legislation by the end of the 115th Congress, i.e. before January 4, 2019.
Passage in the Senate requires a 3/5s vote.

President Hoffa sent letters of support for the JSC process to members of the Select Committee and indicates his desire to work with the Committee to find a solution to this urgent problem. He has also been in touch with the Democratic leadership as this process begins.

Staff are beginning Hill meetings with staff for JSC members. We are also continuing to focus on Republican targets to build support and cosponsorship for the BLA.

Vice President John Murphy is organizing briefings with House and Senate staff with our technical and financial experts. The briefings will focus on the details of the BLA and the defeasement process to keep retirees whole.

The House and Senate will be in recess the weeks of March 25 and April 1st. You are encouraged to reach out and meet with your members of Congress and Senators during this period – particularly members of the JSC. The NUCPP (retiree groups) will be doing the same.

Updated toolkits will be going out shortly.