

## **BRANCH LEVEL ADVOCACY AT WORK**

The following is a summary of the various advocacy related outreach events conducted by your Branch. For each, the objective was to reinforce the National Association of Federal Retirees (NAFR)'s goal of reinforcing/enhancing the dignity and security of retirees, including its current national policy level priorities, with the goal to further engage and possibly influence local /regional level decision makers in the direction advanced by NAFR.

Please note that the national level priorities are identified by the National Office of NAFR. Currently these are:

- enhanced retirement pension income security;
- a national strategy for seniors, including national standard for long term care and homecare;
- a universal public pharmacare program; and
- enhanced communications with veterans and retired RCMP members, including their well-being as they transition to civilian life.

### **October 2023: Meeting with Francis Drouin, MP for Glengarry-Prescott- Russell**

MP Drouin had some prior knowledge of NAFR, was very cordial and positive throughout the meeting, and thanked us for our outreach. In fact, he invited us to schedule future meetings with him as our policy endeavors evolve and/or new items of interest emerge.

With respect to NAFR's current priorities, MP Drouin confirmed that his government is focused on universal pharmacare and that a policy level discussion paper is about to be introduced. He also noted that MP Seamus O'Regan, Minister of Labour and Seniors, is focused on elder care, however no further details were given, as this topic is somewhat complex in view of the fact it intersects with provincial responsibilities.

### **October 2023: Meeting with Eric Duncan, MP for Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry**

MP Duncan was aware of NAFR, greeted us warmly, and invited us to maintain an open dialogue with him. He noted that the four NAFR policy level priorities resonate well with him. He was clear in confirming that retiree pensions, including OAS and CPP need universal protection. He is in favor of providing a fair level of timely support to retiring Canadian Forces and RCMP members, and he highlighted the provision of career transition support and /or mental support as examples. He seemed sympathetic to universal pharmacare, in as much as it results in a zero-cost increase to the Federal budget.

**November 2023:** Meeting with Randy Hopkins, Constituency Affairs Advisor of Michael Barrett, MP for Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

Mr. Hopkins was speaking on behalf of MP Barrett, who had knowledge of NAFR and was aware of our meeting. He acknowledged that government pensions need to be protected. On the question of universal pharmacare, the interest is to provide benefits to those in need and to not duplicate existing programs. He asked that we forward more detailed NAFR information regarding its position paper regarding a national senior's strategy, which was subsequently issued. NAFR's position paper on supporting Veterans was also forwarded for possible interest given MP Barrett's past experience.