Coming out of our AGM, the number one priority for Advocacy Priority for ACER – CART for 2018-2019 was “to participate in the 2019 Federal election by co-operating with other like-minded groups. This was summarized in the following statement:

***ACER-CART will participate in the 2019 Federal elections by co-operating with other like-minded groups to protect pensions, to advocate for a single payer national pharmacare plan, and a federal Ministry for Seniors.***

In support of this priority we will continue to:

* Monitor the 10-year bilateral health funding agreements with the provinces,
* Oppose the surrender of the accrued benefits inherent in defined benefit plans,
* Support the enhancement of the CPP, and
* Oppose the privatization of health care.

**2018 Motions Passed directing ACER-CART Political Action:**

M-1 That ACER-CART continue an aggressive communication initiative to advocate for pension security, and oppose any legislation such as Bill C-27 which would jeopardize defined benefit plans, and combine efforts with organizations conducting similar campaigns.

M-2 That, as a major priority in 2018-2019, ACER-CART continue its support for a comprehensive national Canadian Pharmacare plan.

M-3 That ACER-CART continue calling for a national seniors’ strategy by supporting the Canadian Medical Association’s “Demand a Plan” campaign and ACER-CART’s own “Declaration Concerning a National Health Care Strategy for Seniors.”

M-4 That ACER-CART mount opposition to the privatization of medical services in Canada as an expressed threat to public Medicare in Canada.

M-5 That ACER-CART mount a lobbying campaign advocating for the establishment of a Canadian Federal Seniors’ Ministry. *(As this has been accomplished, our President has already initiated action to offer our assistance to that Office.)*

M-6 That ACER-CART review and monitor the emerging 10-year Federal/Provincial bilateral funding and accountability agreements related to home and community health care services and supports, and to mental health.

M-7 That the provincial Member organizations who together comprise ACER-CART remain committed to develop guidelines to advocate and promote the issues impacting education sector retirees and seniors in Canada while concurrently promoting the specific benefits and services of their association to education sector retirees focused within their own provincial or territorial jurisdiction.

M-8 That ACER-CART be a participant in the establishment of a symposium of like-minded organizations, in order to develop a national advocacy plan with a seniors focus for the 2019 Federal election.

**Advocacy and Lobbying**

At the 2018 AGM through the presentation by Geoff Norquay, we had the opportunity to appreciate the difference between Advocacy and Lobbying in Canada. Advocacy is speaking up on behalf of our members, and holding positions on issues, whereas in Canada Legislation governing Lobbying has become much more stringent, and we need to know the implications on our political activities.

* + Lobbying and lobbyists are much more strictly regulated
  + Fundraising for MPs is off-limits
  + Canadian lobbyists not allowed to organize fundraisers
  + Our contribution limits are the same as any other citizen

**Lobbying** is defined as communication with a public office holder in respect of:

* Legislative proposal
* Introduction, passage, defeat or amendment of any bill or resolution: House of Commons or Senate
* Making or amending regulations
* Developing or amending any policy or program
* Awarding of any contract, grant, contribution or other financial benefit
* Arranging a meeting between a public office holder and any other person

Once they engage with a client, all lobbyists must register with the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying, and report:

* + Name of client and location of headquarters
  + If a corporation, ownership and control, plus subsidiaries
  + If a coalition, who are its members?
  + Details of any public money client has received
  + Subject matter of lobbying: bill, regulation, program, policy, financial benefit, et.
  + Department/institution to be lobbied
  + Communication: written, oral, grass-roots, etc.
  + Monthly reporting of oral and arranged communication with any Designated Public Office Holder

Geoff went on to give us the elements of **CREATING A PLAN**

* Environmental scan
* What you want/need
* Outreach to potential supporters
* Solid research on how many people will benefit and how?
* Wider impacts: support for economic growth/reduced unemployment/greater labour force participation
* Support of experts/spokespersons/champions
* How will you deal with potential opponents?
* Tight set of talking points to explain your proposal

Further:

* When dealing with the government, work from the bottom up
* The Minister should be the last person you see

Here are some initial thoughts for a **DRAFT Action Plan for ACER-CART 2018 – 19.** I’d be delighted to have it fleshed out (as well as names of potential candidates to join me on this committee.)

1. Clarify our status of Advocacy vs. Lobbying. (*ARTA has been doing some work on this.)*
2. Assist Executive in deciding which of the two paths best describes our actions.
3. Enlist other members for the Advocacy Committee
4. Maintain an effective liaison with the President and other Committees to ensure their content on critical issues is the basis for Advocacy positions.
5. Facilitate liaison and participation with other like-minded Organizations.
6. Request Member Organizations name a contact in order to enable sharing of:
   1. Planning
   2. Positions
   3. Past Experiences
   4. Publications
   5. Expectations
7. Facilitate and/or partner in the creation of a Template of Critical Issues that member organizations can use to support a collective stance moving into next years election.

*Thanks for indulging me as I come out of my summer’s hibernation. Is this the type of action you would see going forward. Please attack it with your sharpest pencils.*

*Respectfully submitted . . . .*

*Gordon Cumming*