I have taken the liberty of again attaching the Advocacy Priorities as determined at the past AGM.

Coming out of that session, 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.

I am pleased to acknowledge ACER-CART efforts, particularly in the following activities:

1. **‘ VIBRANT VOICES’** - As reported by Bill, and sponsored by RTO – ERO, the National Association of Federal Retirees (NAFR) and ACER-CART drew a response from a number of like minded groups including the Canadian Association of Pensioners, the Canadian Health Coalition, the Canadian Medical Association, the College and University Retiree Associations of Canada, the International Longevity Associations of Canada, and the National Pensioners Federation. ACER-CART was represented by Bill, Jerry and myself, joined by Roger and Martin wearing their RTO chapeaux. Great organization and hosting by RTO.

Among ACER-CART’s advocacy priorities relevant to the agenda were:

* advocating for **Pension (and Income) Security**, and oppose any legislation such as Bill C-27 which would jeopardize defined benefit plans.
* supporting a **Comprehensive National Canadian Pharmacare Plan**. (universal, accessible with one payer.
* calling for a **National Seniors’ Strategy of Healthy Aging**
* **opposing the privatization of medical services** in Canada as an expressed threat to public Medicare in Canada.
* advocating for the establishment of a **Canadian Federal Seniors’ Ministry**. *(As this has been established, our interest is in seeing its effectiveness and involvement in establishing policy.)*

The final plan of action agreed that the three areas of shared focus would be a Seniors Strategy, Pharmacare and Pension Security.  It was uncertain to me if the final output was being geared to a “Day on the Hill” moreso than the Fall Election.

Bill will be able to report on the follow-up January 10th Conference Call, to get further input on a collective direction.

1. Thanks to Gerry for his initiation of action on the Retirement Security Agenda, and the federal request for input. It’s exciting to see how responsive we can be when there is a relevant and meaningful agenda.

As an ARTA Rep., I was particularly enthused by the capacity of our server to provide Data on the effectiveness of our E-mail blast to members. Daniel reported on December 21’st that the following results from the information we sent to our members:

         12907 out of 18498 members opened their email (69.78%)

         5002 clicked on the link in the email to read the full letter *(blog post)* (27.04%)

         3394 clicked on the link in the letter *(blog post)* to fill out survey (18.35%)

 Communication and commitment of our members is certainly apparent.

1. Kudos to BC again, and JoAnn in particular for their reporting on the Dr. Brian Day court case. Keeping us informed is the first step to effective action when needed.
2. I appreciate the ongoing efforts of Canadian Medical Association and ‘Demand a Plan’. I find it very impactful personally, and I wonder if we could re-introduce it to our membership for their awareness of Health issues going towards the Fall.
3. Initiating work toward an ACER-CART ‘Brochure’ for this Fall’s Federal Election. I do have a tentative commitment from ARTA to involve their Communications capacity in support of the development of the initiative.

My own sin at this point is not to have a committee in place . . . not from lack of thought. When looking at the task to accomplish, I think best knowledge is essential, and when Looking at the initiatives above, I am thinking that I should be in liaison with relevant Executive Members, particularly Bill, Gerry, Marg, Roger and Martin.

I’m interested in your thoughts, and then will urge my efforts onward.

Cheers to all, and Happy New Year,

Gordon Cumming