



# Leaders Throughout Life Insurance Industry

## A MetLife Senior Leader's Observations about Government, Social Responsibility and the Industry

By Mary A. Griffin, President & CEO, Life Insurance Council of New York, Inc.

This year through my column, I will be discussing key issues with some of our most senior leaders, so that you can gain a better sense of the people involved in New York's life insurance industry.

I posed the following questions to Michael A. Zarcone, who is Executive Vice President, Corporate Affairs for MetLife, and Chair of the MetLife Foundation. In 2014, Mike was the Life Insurance Council of New York's Chairman of the Board, and remains one of our Directors today. Before joining MetLife, Mike served as Associate Counsel to Minority Leader Clarence D. Rappleyea in the New York State Assembly. In this position, he was Counsel to the Assembly Committees on Insurance, Banks and Commerce.

**Mike, when you meet with government officials, what is the one thing that you want them to walk away knowing about the life insurance business?**

*The key takeaway is for government officials to understand that life insurance companies are as pro-consumer as they are.*

*Life insurers provide a safety net to individuals and families to address the risks they face throughout their lives. Our companies also offer essential products and services to businesses across the country, both large and small, to help them grow. Government entities provide certain consumer risk protection*



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*programs, but are constrained by limited budgets. It is this balance between what government can afford to do, and what life insurance companies offer, that provides a holistic solution to the societal risks facing individuals, families and businesses. In other words, life insurers play a critical role in helping government officials do their jobs.*

*There will always be some disagreement between government officials and insurers in terms of the most appropriate level of regulation. However, such differences of opinion should not obscure the fact that life insurance companies share similar goals with government officials: to provide consumers with the best products and services to meet their needs.*

**What do you think government officials would find most surprising about the life insurance industry?**

*When I began my career in Albany working for the Legislature, I didn't have a choice in assignments and I was asked to focus on insurance issues. As I began to learn about the industry, I was surprised to hear about all the programs and investments life insurers undertake to protect the environment, support medical research and, through charitable giving, make a positive difference for the people, families and communities we serve. This impressive array of activities spoke to my own sense of social responsibility and community service.*

*For example, at MetLife, we have invested \$2.9 billion in renewable energy projects since 2003, and our MetLife Foundation has provided more than \$670 million in grants since 1976. In 2013, the Foundation committed \$200 million over five years to ensure that more people across the globe have access to the quality financial services they need to build better lives.*

*Of course, MetLife is certainly not alone in taking its responsibility as a good corporate citizen to heart. There are numerous other examples of the life insurance industry in New York State making investments in infrastructure, people and communities, the breadth of which would certainly surprise some government officials.*

*The bottom line is that the world is a better place because life insurers are in it. [A]*

*Mary A. Griffin is the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Life Insurance Council of New York, Inc. LICONY is the principal voice of the life insurance industry in New York. LICONY works to create and maintain a legislative, regulatory, and judicial environment that encourages its members to conduct and grow their life insurance businesses here in New York State. For stories about New Yorkers who have benefitted greatly from purchasing the products of life insurers, go to [www.licony.org](http://www.licony.org), click on "Published Articles" in the NEWSROOM box on the homepage.*