

**UNITED STEELWORKERS**  
**SOAR**  
STEELWORKERS ORGANIZATION OF ACTIVE RETIREES

**CONNECTION**  
WE'RE STRONGER TOGETHER



# SEASON'S GREETINGS!

STAY HEALTHY. STAY ACTIVE. STAY SAFE.



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## Everyone Will Benefit from Infrastructure and Social Safety Net Bills



On Monday, November 15, President Biden signed the \$1 trillion infrastructure bill into law, making massive investments in transportation, broadband, road and bridge construction, and more.

For months, this bill has been moving through Congress in tandem with the President's social safety net bill – the Build Back Better Act – which the U.S. House passed on November 19 and is now awaiting action by the Senate.

Together, these bills seek to address a variety of economic and social issues exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The prior is the most significant effort in nearly 70 years to update our nation's physical infrastructure, and it will reshape our economy to be competitive for the next several generations.

Upon President Biden's signing of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, USW International President Tom Conway said, "Our elected leaders have long promised this kind of transformational infrastructure investment but ultimately failed to deliver. Now, thanks to President Biden's vision and leadership, Congress has finally come together and passed bipartisan legislation that will directly benefit American workers and ensure a brighter future for generations to come."

The latter – the Build Back Better Act – is expected to be taken up by the Senate in December. In addition to the millions of good-paying jobs that the President's infrastructure plan will create, this legislation includes popular ideas that will benefit working families, like universal pre-k for 3- to 5-year-olds, paid family medical leave, and tax breaks for the overwhelming majority of workers.

Additionally, the House-passed Build Back Better Act (BBBA) includes a historic expansion of Medicare to include coverage for hearing aids and other auditory care for the first time. It places a cap (\$2000) on Medicare Part D out-of-pocket costs for seniors and caps the price of insulin at \$35 per month. The BBBA also establishes a Medicare drug negotiation program which is a monumental leap for retirees. According to the Congressional Budget Office, drug negotiations will save Medicare \$262 billion. The Senate will likely amend the bill and then send it back to the House before it becomes law.

The Alliance for Retired Americans applauds the House passage of the Build Back Better bill that will significantly improve the lives of older Americans," said Richard Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance. "Seniors appreciate that the bill takes steps to lower prescription drug prices for retirees and all Americans. Now that the House has voted, it's time for the Senate to deliver for the American people without delay."

**Although the holiday season is upon us, kindly take a moment from your busy holiday schedule to contact your Senators today! Wishing you all happy, healthy and safe holidays!**

*Julie Stein*, SOAR Director



## Wishing You a Safe Holiday Season; Looking Forward to 2022

Like most everyone, I'm itching for the day when everything is back to normal. With any luck, I'm hoping that will be next year because we've scheduled our 2022 SOAR Conference for August 5 and 6 at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, NV.

As you know, our International SOAR Conference always happens in conjunction to the USW's International Convention, both of which had to be canceled in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are several items that I thought I should bring to your attention:

1. The delegates to the SOAR Conference will elect the Officers and Executive Board members of SOAR for a term of three years.
2. Chapters large enough to send delegates will be notified by mail.
3. For those chapters planning on submitting resolutions to the conference, all resolutions must be received in the SOAR office in Pittsburgh, no later than July 1, 2022.

SOAR bylaws require we publish notice for this conference in our publications, so you will see more information about it beginning with this newsletter.

**To all in the SOAR family, I hope you enjoy a safe and healthy holiday season; and get ready for what may be a very active year for SOAR.**

*Bill Pienta*, SOAR President



## A Force Majeure Experience

Years ago, at a SOAR Executive Board meeting, our board members were trying to figure out how to rectify a problem we were having. It was decided that the way to solve this problem was by simply doing it a certain way. However, I noticed that if we were to do it that way, it would go against the SOAR bylaws. So, our Chairman, former SOAR President Lynn Williams at the time, said, "I think that's what they call a Force Majeure." My hope is that you all will learn what I learned from this experience. A short definition is below. But, in other words, it means, we have to do what we have to do!

force majeure | ,fôrs mä'ZHər | noun

1 Law unforeseeable circumstances that prevent someone from fulfilling a contract.

2 Irresistible compulsion or greater force.

*Charlie*

**SOAR Chapter  
Connection**

A bi-monthly publication  
of SOAR

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**Articles and Photos Requested**

- The next deadline for the SOAR in Action magazine will be Jan 12, and articles should be emailed to the SOAR Director Julie Stein at [jstein@usw.org](mailto:jstein@usw.org)
- The deadline for the next publication of the SOAR Chapter Connection newsletter is Jan 25. Email articles and photos to [soar3@icloud.com](mailto:soar3@icloud.com)

**Elaine Sez:**

***Serendipity: An Unplanned Fortunate Discovery***

While sitting at our nightly campfire, Charlie and I were reminiscing about the many places we have been to during SOAR events and all the people we have met in the past twenty years. Many of these people became our good friends. The word serendipity came to mind as we recalled experiences, places, and things we have done that were pleasant surprises. We are fortunate. We look forward to many more serendipitous moments in the future. Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season.



Here is your chuckle for the day: Recently, as I have done for many years, I put my 13 lb. turkey on my back porch to thaw. The temperature was perfect, and my fridge was full. This morning I went to get the bird, and it was GONE! How could this happen!? It was on a table against the house, so I thought it was pretty safe. NOT! The critter who ate it lifted it off the table and enjoyed all the white meat! Luckily, one side was still in the plastic wrap and untouched. I salvaged one leg, one thigh, and one wing plus the pope's nose! Sigh! I am sure the critter will be back tonight for the leftovers. Hope you all had a Happy Thanksgiving!



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## Medicare Premiums To Take a Big Bite Out of Social Security's 5.9% COLA in 2022

by Robert Roach, Jr.



The standard monthly Medicare Part B premium in 2022 will rise to \$170.10 from \$148.50 in 2021 – a 14.55% jump and more than double what had been expected. That will certainly put a damper on what had been the biggest cost of living adjustment for Social Security beneficiaries in four decades. The 5.9% increase in 2022 amounts to an additional \$92 per month for the average retired worker.

A Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) official told CNN that \$10 of the \$21.70 increase was due to the price of a new Alzheimer's drug, Aduhelm. CMS has not yet determined whether Medicare will cover the drug, which costs \$56,000 per year per patient, and could cost Medicare \$29 billion in just one year.

It is outrageous that one drug is so expensive that it can cause a huge spike in Part B premiums. The price of Aduhelm is just one potential issue with the new drug. The FDA's approval raised many questions and concerns about the process, the drug's effectiveness and its cost. Several congressional committees are looking into the approval process, and the agency's inspector general is reviewing it.

President Biden's "Build Back Better Act" has been passed by the U.S. House, and it helps address skyrocketing drug prices in a number of ways: it establishes a \$35 per-month limit on the cost of insulin under Medicare; caps out-of-pocket prescription drug costs at \$2,000 per year; and limits drug corporations' ability to raise prices faster than inflation.

However, the way Congress has written the legislation, a new drug such as Aduhelm would not be subject to price negotiation. Seniors will be better off if the Build Back Better Act becomes law, but our work to rein in the pharmaceutical industry and lower drug prices is far from over.

*Robert Roach, Jr. is president of the Alliance for Retired Americans. He was previously General Secretary-Treasurer of the IAMAW. For more information, visit [www.retiredamericans.org](http://www.retiredamericans.org).*



**“I love this union cause. I hold it more dear than I do my family or my life. I am willing to devote to it all that I am or have or hope for in this world.”**

William H. Sylvis  
Americas first National Labor Leader  
Founder, National Union of Iron Moulders, July 5, 1859



## AAM Receives Early Present Along With All of US

While in the midst of researching and compiling our 2021 Holiday Gift Guide, the dedicated staff at the Alliance for American Manufacturing received an early holiday present of our own when Congress passed a robust \$1.2 trillion infrastructure package. If you have been following AAM's space here in the SOAR Chapter Connection newsletter you are well aware of our constant beckoning for a substantial infrastructure package. So, it was a gift for us and all Americans when on Monday, November 15 President Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act into law.

The historic bipartisan \$1.2 trillion package includes funding to rebuild the nation's roads, bridges, ports, public transportation, railways, broadband internet access, electric grid and more. The law also includes many Buy America preferences which will maximize the job potential for our workers and ensure that America's future will be made in America, too.

The measure provides an opportunity to create millions of new factory and manufacturing jobs because the legislation directs that a large amount of taxpayer money be spent and reinvested right back into American workers, businesses and communities.

President Biden emphasized that the Investment and Jobs Act will "create millions of high-paying, union jobs while boosting our economic competitiveness in the world and strengthening our supply chains." We thank the President and members of Congress for finally making a worthy investment in America's infrastructure. After all, it is an investment in the lives of all Americans and will be a boost to our union brothers and sisters.

As for the aforementioned 2021 AAM Holiday Gift Guide, you can access our list of fine made in America products from all 50 states plus Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico by logging on to [www.americanmanufacturing.org/blog/the-2021-made-in-america-holiday-gift-guide/](http://www.americanmanufacturing.org/blog/the-2021-made-in-america-holiday-gift-guide/)

*Jeff Bonior* is a staff writer at the Alliance for American Manufacturing



## Get Your Flu Shot

This flu season, protect yourself and your loved ones by getting the flu shot. It's the best way to protect against flu and its potentially serious complications. The flu can be very serious, especially if you're 65 or older.

Flu shots are covered for people with Medicare, when you get it from a doctor, pharmacy, or other health care provider that accepts Medicare or your Medicare plan.

Remember, flu and COVID-19 vaccines help protect you from different viruses. The flu shot reduces the risk of flu illness and doesn't protect against COVID-19. Likewise, the COVID-19 vaccine is the best protection against the COVID-19 disease and doesn't protect against flu. Both vaccines, however, can be given at the same time.

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## Retirees Applaud House Passage of Build Back Better Act



Statement by Richard Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance for Retired Americans, regarding passage of President Biden's Build Back Better Act, H.R. 5376, in the U.S. House:

“The Alliance for Retired Americans applauds the House passage of the historic Build Back Better bill that will significantly improve the lives of older Americans.

“Seniors appreciate that the bill takes steps to lower prescription drug prices for retirees and all Americans. For the first time, Medicare will be required to negotiate lower drug prices for some medicines. The legislation also caps the price of insulin at \$35 per month and annual out-of-pocket drug spending by Medicare beneficiaries at \$2,000. In addition, inflationary caps will limit drug corporations' capacity to raise prices faster than inflation.

“Adult vaccines recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) that are covered under Medicare Part D, such as for shingles, would be covered at no cost, just like the flu and COVID vaccines under Part B are today. Together these provisions will help millions of Americans afford the medicines that they need to stay healthy.

“The legislation includes \$150 billion to expand home health care and services for seniors and people with disabilities while also increasing wages and benefits for caregiving workers. With this funding, hundreds of thousands more Americans will be able to receive the long-term care and services they need at home, rather than an institution.

“We also strongly support the expansion of Medicare to include guaranteed hearing benefits for seniors with hearing loss. The average Medicare beneficiary spends \$1,100 for hearing treatment, including hearing aids. Untreated hearing loss can lead to social isolation and falls and can increase the risk of dementia as people age.

“Now that the House has voted, it's time for the Senate to deliver for the American people without delay.”



“Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in an attractive and well-preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways, champagne in one hand, strawberries in the other, body thoroughly used up, totally worn out and screaming WOO Hoo - What a Ride!”

**Matt Ledington**

There is always something for which to be



In the spirit of the holiday season, our thoughts turn gratefully to those who help us build SOAR.

From our entire organization, we wish you a safe healthy, and happy Thanksgiving.

In UNITY,  
Stay Healthy. Stay Safe. Stay Active.



## SOAR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE SCHEDULED



The SOAR International Conference is scheduled for August 5-6, 2022 at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, NV. Chapters large enough to send delegates will be notified by mail.

For those chapters planning on submitting resolutions to the conference, all resolutions must be received in the SOAR office in Pittsburgh, no later than July 1, 2022.



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**APPENDIX A: SOAR CONFERENCE DELEGATES - NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS****RULES OF PROCEDURE**

Pursuant to action taken at the International SOAR Conference on April 8 and 9, 2005 this Appendix is amended as follows:

**ARTICLE I INTRODUCTION**

**Section 1.** The SOAR By-laws, Article IX, provide that the current SOAR Officers and Executive Board members hold office until the International SOAR Conference, to be held in conjunction with the USW International Convention. The delegates to the SOAR Conference are to elect the new Officers and Executive Board members for a term of (3) years.

**Section 2.** The following procedures shall govern the nomination and election process for the delegates to the SOAR Conference.

Article VII, Section 2 of the SOAR By-laws as amended reads as follows:

“The District SOAR organizations shall consist of representatives from the geographic area covered by the corresponding District of the USW. The District Representatives shall be selected from the membership in each District. The District Representatives will constitute the delegates to the SOAR Conference. The number of District Representatives will be based upon the membership in each District in accordance with the procedures established by the SOAR Executive Board with the approval of the Executive Board of the USW.”

**ARTICLE II AUTOMATIC DELEGATES AND OBSERVERS**

**Section 1.** SOAR Officers, Executive Board members and Coordinators (one (1) Coordinator, who is a SOAR member and not on the USW staff, per District selected by the USW District Director) shall be considered automatic delegates to the SOAR Conference. SOAR Coordinators who are not automatic delegates or who are not elected as District Representatives and SOAR Coordinators who are employed by the USW may attend the SOAR Conference as observers.

**ARTICLE III ELECTION OF SOAR CONFERENCE DELEGATES**

**Section 1.** SOAR Chapters with more than 250 dues paying members. These SOAR Chapters shall elect their allotted delegate(s) at their regularly scheduled chapter meeting six (6) months prior to the date the International Conference is to be held. If a SOAR Chapter does not have a regularly scheduled meeting in that month the election may be held in either the month before or the month after, upon notification of such variance to the District Executive Board Member. The SOAR in Action magazine shall contain information alerting the membership to the upcoming election of delegates in an issue to be published no later than seven (7) months prior to the date the International SOAR Conference is to be held.

**Section 2. At-Large Delegates.** The remaining allotted delegates from each district will be known as “At-Large Delegates” and will be elected at a District Conference or several geographic Conferences within the District. To be considered a candidate for At-Large Delegate, any member in good standing must attend the District Conference in their geographic area or submit a letter to the District Executive Board Member at least seven (7) days prior to the date of the Conference indicating they would like their name submitted for nomination and will accept if nominated. Only the delegates to the District or Geographic Conference who are from a Chapter of less than 250 members shall be eligible to vote for the At-large delegates from that District or geographic area. Procedures for conducting this election may vary from District to District, but the election must be by secret ballot, unless no contest exists. This section may be amended to better serve the situation in the Districts as needed as long as such amendment is approved by the SOAR Executive Board and serves to allow for fair representation of the members from the smaller SOAR Chapters.

**Section 3. Allocation of Delegates.**

(a) The number of delegates allotted to each District shall be one per every 500 dues paying members or a majority fraction thereof; provided that each District shall have at least one representative.

(b) The number of delegates allotted to each SOAR Chapter of more than 250 members shall be as follows:

One delegate for each Chapter of 251 to 750 members

Two delegates for each Chapter of 751 to 1250 members

Three delegates for each Chapter of 1251 to 1750 members

Delegates shall increase at the above rate for Chapters of larger size

The Director of SOAR shall furnish each SOAR Chapter with a report on their current membership and the number of delegate(s) they are eligible to elect at their SOAR Chapter meeting no later than seven (7) months prior to the date the International Conference is to be held.

**Section 4. Eligibility.** To be eligible to be elected as a SOAR Conference Delegate from a SOAR Chapter or as an At-large delegate a person must be a member in good standing.



**“It’s hard to make a comeback when you haven’t been anywhere.”**

*Charlie*

Season's Greetings from the SOAR Office



During this holiday season, our thoughts turn gratefully to those that help us build SOAR. Simply and truly, we thank you.

On behalf of the entire SOAR organization, we wish you a bright holiday season and a new year filled with hope, good health and retirement security. May it also bring plenty of opportunities to stay active and involved with SOAR.

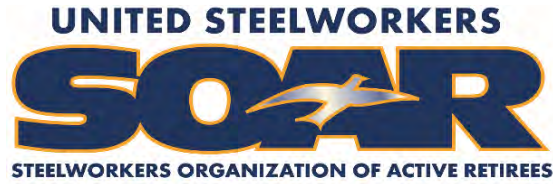
**Notice:** The SOAR office will be closed to observe the USW's headquarters holiday shutdown beginning on Wednesday, December 22, 2021 and will reopen Monday, January 3, 2022.

**In solidarity; and in the spirit of the season,**

*Julie Stein and Zach Martin*



# 2022



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