



Medicare and Social Security Is on the Ballot in November



Each summer the anniversaries of Medicare and Social Security provide an opportunity to reflect on the difference these programs have made to generations of Americans. Medicare and Medicaid turn 55 July 30 and Social Security celebrates its 85th year August 14.

These programs are essential to the retirement security of more than 62 million people across the country who rely on their earned Social Security benefits and 52.6 million people aged 65 and older who rely on Medicare for guaranteed health coverage. But we can never take these programs for granted, and their future is on the ballot in November.

Six months ago, while attending the World Economic Forum’s summit of global elites in the Swiss mountaintop retreat of Davos, President Trump told CNBC that — if reelected — cuts to Social Security would be “on the table.” “It’ll be toward the end of the year,” he continued. He was responding to a question about the overall budget and specifically, cuts to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

“And at the right time, we will take a look at that. You know, that’s actually the easiest of all things, if you look, cause it’s such a big percentage,” he continued. The White House, and the President, have never disavowed this statement.

President Trump may not realize that before Medicare, only half of our nation’s seniors had health insurance. He may not need Social Security, but one in every four households rely on it to cover daily expenses. The typical Social Security benefit received by a retired worker in the United States was a modest \$16,656 in 2017 — but without that income, the poverty rate for people over the age of 65 would skyrocket from 9 to 40 percent!

Social Security also fuels our economy, contributing more than \$800 billion each year and helped keep our economy going during the COVID-19 economic crisis.

President Trump was very clear about cutting Medicare and Social Security if he is re-elected. If we want Medicare and Social Security to remain a bedrock of retirement security for current and future retirees, we must make sure everyone knows what he said just a few months ago.

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.

Take Your Vote Seriously. Your Life, Our Future Depends Upon It.



If there is one thing you take seriously after reading this, please let it be my advice to visit www.uswvoices.org/state-voting-information to look up your voter registration status and find out your options for voting early or by mail. Now, let me tell you why. States and localities all across America are struggling to conduct primary elections during an unforeseen global health pandemic we've all come to know as COVID-19.

In an attempt to ensure voters don't have to choose between potentially exposing themselves to a life-threatening virus and exercising their right to vote, some states sent mail ballot request forms to every voter. Some extended early voting hours. Others, in fact many, consolidated polling locations in an attempt to minimize voter contact which inadvertently resulted in long lines with voters waiting hours to cast their ballot.

While early and mail balloting efforts have not been flawless, countless voters who waited until Election Day to cast their ballot faced extreme hardships at their polling locations. In states like Pennsylvania, Ohio, Wisconsin, New York, Kentucky and Georgia, voters reported waiting in line for hours (some many as eight hours) to vote.

The example of Jefferson County, Kentucky will answer your obvious question as to why voters in many states forced to wait so long. Prior to Election Day, the county consolidated polling locations for some 616,000 voters into just one site. You read that correctly. One polling location for 616,000 voters. This example is drastic, but certainly not unique. And, it is exactly why every voter needs to take serious consideration for early and mail balloting opportunities that are available to them.

But let's be honest. Voter access and disenfranchisement is not a new problem. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has popularized the inequities and structural barriers that have plagued our democratic process for years. The 2013 decision of the U.S. Supreme Court to gut the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is one of the most far-reaching and detrimental rulings in history. When written, the Act required certain states and localities with a history of racial discrimination to seek approval from the federal government for any changes they wished to make to voting procedures at the local level. The idea was to create transparency and an opportunity to vet voting reforms prior to voters being disenfranchised. Now, the burden to prove discrimination falls on people who have already been disenfranchised rather than on the federal government.

This change in process has created an environment where some states have been rewriting voting laws haphazardly and without reason, and voters (particularly those of color, the elderly, and young people) are paying the price. Under COVID-19 and the gutting of the Voting Rights Act, a worst-case scenario is being realized with regard to our most vital civil right: the right to vote. **Don't wait until Election Day to decide how you will cast your ballot.**

Julie Stein, SOAR Director

Why Wouldn't We Do the Same?



With the political season already in full-swing in some areas, I thought it would be of value to remind everyone of the stated purpose of SOAR and what we as an organization strive to do. Our purpose, in part, is “to engage in political and legislative action.” SOAR also exists “to advance the policies of the USW.” In doing so, SOAR will attempt to provide factual, accurate data and science-supported information to our members to provide reasoning for the position(s) that we take on issues and candidates.

Lately, too many conversations that I have been having with folks include comments like, “It’s just common sense...” or “Everybody knows...,” or “You don’t have to be a scientist to figure that out...” These types of comments are usually reserved for those who have an opinion, but nothing else to back up their position about a subject matter. Don’t get me wrong, everyone is entitled to an opinion and I respect that; but, SOAR has an obligation and a responsibility to give a logical reason as to why we take the position(s) that we do. Also, as to why we do not take a position on some issues that may be important to individuals, but not germane to the reason SOAR exists.

The USW as an organization has taken a position that any federal candidate (U.S. House, Senate or President) who wishes to be considered for endorsement must return a completed USW Federal Candidate Questionnaire which deals with issues important to our Union.

I believe it is proper of our union not to consider any candidate that will not take the time to put in writing their position on labor issues and state whether they support our position on these issues. If a candidate doesn’t support labor issues, worker's rights, and retirement security then they do not support the members or retirees of our union. For example: The Chamber of Commerce supports business-friendly candidates. The NRA supports candidates that support their position. Why would we as a labor organization not do the same?

Bill Pienta, SOAR President



Members of SOAR and the Alliance for Retired Americans are united in mourning the loss of Rep. John Lewis of Georgia. In addition to being a leader of the civil rights movement, Representative Lewis was a lifelong champion for working people and older Americans. **May he rest as he lived—in power and in peace.**



Volunteers Needed for the USW's Member-to-Member Postcard Campaign

One new tactic we'll be using during this year's election work is personalized postcards written by USW retirees and mailed to USW retirees. Whether the message is urging someone to get registered or reminding them to vote, this individual outreach stands out in the mail. It's also a way that retirees – no matter where they live in the U.S. – can easily get involved in the work to elect pro-worker candidates.

The USW's Women of Steel program is taking the lead with logistics for this project, and SOAR wants to help!

Any retiree willing to help will receive a packet in the mail containing blank postcards, sample messages, and instructions on where to return them. It's a small step that can make a big impact.

If you'd like to help out, please call the USW SOAR office toll-free 1-866-208-4420 or email your name and address to arico@usw.org

United States Census 2020



The 2020 Census is happening now. Your response matters.

Health clinics. Fire departments. Schools. Even roads and highways. The census can shape many different aspects of your community.

- Census results help determine how billions of dollars in federal funding flow into states and communities each year.
- The results determine how many seats in Congress each state gets.
- It's mandated by the U.S. Constitution in Article 1, Section 2: The U.S. has counted its population every 10 years since 1790.
- For questions about responding to the 2020 Census, call 844-330-2020 from 7 am to 2 am Eastern Time.

Source: <https://2020census.gov/en.html>

No man can wear one face to himself and another to the multitude without finally getting bewildered as to which may be true.

-Hawthorne



FRIDAY ALERT

People 65+, Women, and Democrats Are Taking the COVID-19 Threat Most Seriously

A new Axios-Ipsos poll shows that the longer the coronavirus pandemic lasts, the more Americans are viewing the pandemic through a partisan lens and moving apart politically.

According to the poll, partisanship is the main driver of worries about the virus and personal actions to contain its spread, such as wearing masks or practicing social distancing. Women and people aged 65 and older take the COVID-19 threat more seriously than men and younger people. Republicans, specifically, have never shared the intense concern of other groups.

Race also plays an important role in attitudes towards the pandemic. Forty-six percent of Black Americans know someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, compared to only 35 percent of whites and 36 percent of Hispanics. Twenty-eight percent of Black Americans, 11 percent of whites, and 17 percent of Hispanics know someone who has died from the virus.

“Seniors are most at risk from dying from the coronavirus, so they have reason to be careful,” said Joseph Peters, Jr., Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “As the virus continues to spread we need to find common ground and unite to meet this challenge.”

Source: An excerpt from the July 10, 2020, Friday Alert Retiree News



Say No to the COVID-19 Virus

- Elaine and I are taking the necessary precautions to avoid getting this deadly disease and we've pretty much been staying at home.
- We've been wearing our face coverings whenever we go to the grocery store or library or other public building. Until a week ago, we were noticing that we definitely were in the minority.
- Now, Indiana has a state-mandate to wear face coverings in public places and we're glad of that.
- Play it safe, everybody. The life you save could be your own.

Charlie

Without a Union



Without a Union, workers are “at-will employees” who can be fired at any time with or without cause. While many workers believe there is a government agency to help them fight an unjust discharge, unless you were fired due to race, religion, or age, there is no such protection for you.

Without a Union, your boss gets to decide your wages, the kind of insurance you have and how much you pay for it. Since a non-Union worker does not have a contract, they do not have a grievance procedure to stop management from changing rules any time they feel like it nor is there a contractual procedure in place to end unfair treatment in the workplace.

Without a Union, the boss gets to decide who gets the best jobs and who receives promotions. The boss also determines the hours you work and the conditions you work in.

However, with a Union – YOU HAVE A VOICE! With a Union contract, you have negotiated procedures to settle disagreements and ensure management treats you as an equal. Management and politicians on the right are doing their damndest to convince workers that Unions are a thing of the past. But, as you and I both know, “We would not go to work without one!”

Source: Excerpt of an article by USW District 2 Director, Michael Bolton in his September 2019 issue of USW District 2 NEWS printed here with permission.



**SOAR Chapter
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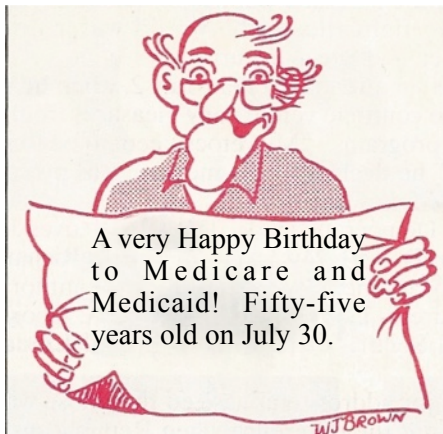
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Old Charlie Sez



Take It From Old Charlie:

And get this...Social Security will be 85 years old on August 14!

Now that's cause for celebration for sure. I just hope I can dodge this COVID-19 virus long enough to make it to 85!

Congratulations Social Security! I know that the Trump administration is trying to cut you but I'll do my best to save you!

Elaine Says...

They say that something good always comes out of something bad.

During the pandemic we have stayed home. A lot. This has led to some discoveries.

First, I was told I had too many spoons! Now I've been working in that kitchen for forty-four years and I didn't know I had too many spoons. So now, when I want to use one of my favorite spoons, I have to go to another cupboard and not the silverware drawer.

And then I was told I had too many glasses. Who knew? So now... half of my glasses are now in Amazon Prime boxes in the basement.

Then I was told there was too much food in the freezer and the refrigerator and the pantry. Humm. I'm thinking we should go to the basement and the garage and take inventory.

How many screwdrivers, boxes of nails, measuring things, and such does one need? And how many lawnmowers, roto-tillers, hoes, rakes, and shovels? Just sayin....

We Want Articles and Photos

- The deadline for articles for the next publication of the SOAR in Action magazine is August 31 and should be emailed to the SOAR Director at jstein@usw.org
- The deadline for the next publication of the SOAR Chapter Connection newsletter is September 25 and items should be emailed to Charlie Averill at soar3@icloud.com
- Photos should have a short caption included.
- Thanks so much.

Charlie

We Need More American-Made PPE to Fight COVID-19



When the COVID-19 pandemic struck the United States with full force in March of this year it quickly became apparent that our nation was not able to provide the necessary supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) that was so badly needed by health care professionals and those responders working on the front lines.

In the ensuing months, an even higher demand for PPE was realized as the coronavirus spread to frighteningly high levels in many southern and western states.

With state mandates and just good common sense, most Americans have made face masks a part of their daily lives when they gather with other people while out in public places.

This has dramatically increased the demand for PPE and now, more than five months later, many medical professionals are still fighting the battle of securing enough PPE to safely treat infected patients. Doctors and nurses have had to consistently reuse face masks, face shields and gowns in the hardest-hit states where hospitals are at capacity and intensive care unit (ICU) beds are at maximum occupation.

American manufacturers, both large and small, have heroically stepped up by the thousands often pivoting from their typical product production and making much-needed PPE instead.

But after so many months, why is there still a shortage of these vital medical supplies?

A major part of the problem is that decades of offshoring meant that our domestic manufacturing base was severely depleted when this crisis began. President Trump and his administration have hesitated to deploy a centralized strategy and provide guidance and coordination at the federal level.

Experts at the American Medical Association want the Trump administration to use the Defense Production Act (DPA) to direct additional companies to make more of these essential supplies so there will be no shortages anywhere in the United States.

We at the Alliance for American Manufacturing applaud our nation's manufacturers for their valiant efforts but would like to see more help from the federal government. We ask you to call the White House at (202) 456-1111 and tell the President to invoke the Defense Production Act concerning PPE.

Too many of our friends and neighbors have already died. American healthcare workers and the general public deserve all the help we can get out of our tax dollars in Washington, D.C.

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

SOAR Chapters Take Notice:

If your chapter has not filled out and returned the financial report requested by letter on April 15, 2020, please scan and email it to arico@usw.org. Should you have any questions, feel free to contact the SOAR office toll-free at (866) 208-4420. It is imperative that you return your SOAR Government Report to our office, as soon as possible.

When is the Next Election for SOAR Chapter Officers? From SOAR Chapter - Standard By-Laws Article 6. Elective Offices

1. Elective offices of this chapter shall consist of the following: President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, and three (3) Trustees and if provided for, Financial Secretary
2. Nomination of officers shall be held at a membership meeting during the month of October 1992 and nomination and election of officers will be held in November of 1992 and every four years thereafter. Each term of office shall be for a period of four (4) years commencing with the month of November, 1992. No member shall hold more than one (1) office in a Chapter however Chapter officers shall be eligible to serve on the SOAR Executive Board or as a District SOAR Coordinator.
3. Members in good standing as of the date of the nominations and election of officers shall be eligible to hold Chapter office.
4. Vacancies caused by ineligibility, death, or resignation shall be filled by appointment by the remaining members of the Chapter Executive Board until the next election provided that if the vacancy is in the office of the President, the Vice President shall serve as President for the remainder of the term. In the performance of their duties all officers shall conform to the policies and directives of the International Executive Board of the United Steelworkers and the International Executive Board of SOAR.

Accordingly, the next election of SOAR Chapter officers will be in November of this year.

Editor's Note: In order to protect our members from the spread of COVID-19, it may be necessary to postpone the scheduling of nominations and elections of officers, until it has been deemed safe to do so.

SOAR Stories by Charlie

“Retiring twenty-two years ago after having been active in my local union was like falling off the edge of the world. Oh, I could have spent retirement doing some long-forgotten maintenance, and landscaping and yard work around the house and taking up some old and new hobbies but there was just something missing. I was so grateful to have a good pension and with the knowledge that our union had my back into the future that I wanted to do my part in making sure others would have that same sense of security.”

SOAR Update From District 1 (Ohio)



All of us in Ohio want to send our best wishes to our goods friends in SOAR, the USW, and our sisters/brothers across the U.S. and Canada. We hope everyone is taking the necessary precautions to stay healthy, and to protect our families and communities from this deadly virus.

In Ohio, we lost a dear friend, a real Union activist to COVID-19. Jim Harvey was the Treasurer of the Youngstown SOAR Chapter 28-5. He was a real leader, and longtime activist who was always there to



fight for worker's rights and retirement security, with a confident smile, always ready to push the last mile for justice. Jim will be missed more than we can say here!

COVID-19 has hit close to home for many of us. We MUST be aware that ANYONE that says that COVID-19, is not a danger is NOT our friend, and does not have our best interest at heart.

Our Warren/Youngstown SOAR groups have been working with allies in our community, local officials and other unions to develop a wide alliance that can take up all our needs, strengthens our ability to help represent our members, friends and protect our community. Awareness of COVID-19, is one of the key areas we wanted to highlight. It is especially concerning that African Americans have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 due to many factors, such as, a lack of access to quality medical care. SOAR along with our new coalition and our union is helping here in Ohio, informing folks of the dangers of COVID-19 and how to protect ourselves and our families during this pandemic.

Equally important, our International Union has endorsed Joe Biden for President, who has a long history of standing with our Union, and the working-class. Ohio, a swing-state, may be key going into November elections, and we can assure a new, better future by uniting, and voting like our lives depend on it, because they do.

In spite of attempts by some politicians working against our best interests of all working people, to force people to vote in person, at the risk of everyone's health due to COVID-19, fortunately, here in Ohio we can vote by mail and avoid the health risks of standing in line or being in a crowded voting location for a period of time.

All registered voters in Ohio are to receive applications for absentee ballots which will be sent around Labor Day and we strongly encourage all working-class folks and especially retirees, to return their absentee ballot applications to the board of elections right away.

We must push for a record turnout for mail-in ballot voting as, many people in the civil rights movement, fought and some died, fighting for all our precious voting rights. We should not have to endanger our lives, other's lives, to carry out that right.

And finally, due to this pandemic, the Ohio SOAR Conference scheduled for September 14, 2020, has been postponed and will hopefully be moved to a new date in 2021.

Please stay safe and healthy!

Jeff DeLong, District 1 SOAR Executive Board Member

Bruce Bastick, At-Large Contributor/Coordinator



Quality Care for Nursing Home Residents and Workers During COVID-19 Act

Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) have filed the Quality Care for Nursing Home Residents and Workers during COVID-19 Act, H.R. 6698 and S. 3644, to help address this crisis and protect residents and workers during this pandemic. The bill not only mandates testing and requires stricter safety protocols, it also ensures residents can return to the facility if they left due to COVID-19. The bill does the following:

Infection Prevention and Control

Requires nursing homes to have a full-time infection control specialist. It also requires states to survey agencies to ensure surveyors have adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) and conduct inspections within 72 hours if a facility's ratio of death to cases or suspected cases exceeds 5%.

Testing

Requires residents to be tested once a week and workers to be tested daily or screened until adequate testing is available.

Worker Safety

Requires facilities to provide comprehensive worker training, PPE and two weeks of sick leave.

Transparency

Requires facilities to report all COVID-19 cases, including demographic information, as well as all COVID-19 and non-COVID 19 deaths within 24 hours, and to inform residents, families or their representatives and workers within 12 hours of a confirmed case or death. Nursing homes must also report PPE availability and need, staffing and testing data.

Strike Teams

Provides \$500 million to states to establish expert strike teams to be deployed within 72 hours of 3 confirmed or suspected COVID 19 cases

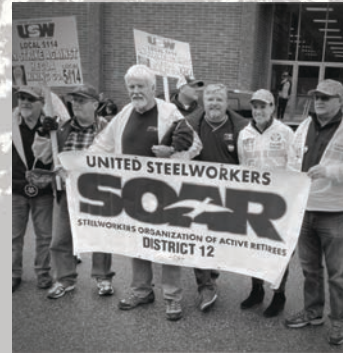
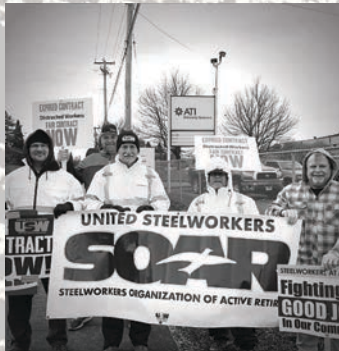
Designating COVID-19 Facilities

Requires CMS to establish criteria for a facility to be designated as COVID-19-only. This ensures appropriate guidelines to protect residents.

Addresses Complaint Surveys

Requires that the government develop a plan to address other non-emergency nursing home inspections that were suspended during the pandemic and reinstitute them as soon as possible.

Our union is stronger when Steelworker retirees are involved as activists, advocates and volunteers; which is why the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR) was established, in 1985.



Celebrating 35 YEARS OF ACTIVISM

STAYING ACTIVE. STAYING INVOLVED. STAYING CONNECTED.

