



Don't Be Fooled...



This being the last opportunity before the November election that I can write to you, I thought it might be valuable to give you something to ponder. Retirees should not be deceived by a recent budget proposal that proponents falsely claim will be to our benefit. After years of fighting against the efforts of politicians who want to undermine Social Security, we've learned not to be fooled by coded language such as, "cutting waste" or "getting the Government out of your life." We know such political speak is merely a ruse with the goal of privatizing or eliminating Social Security and Medicare!

All that glitters isn't gold, and as more people enter retirement age, the Republican budget proposes to reduce funding for administrating area Social Security offices. When Social Security offices close, retirees will have more trouble accessing Social Security and other vital services. As a result, we will not be served as well and will start to believe their baloney that seniors could be better served by the private sector. However, that simply is not true because Social Security administrative costs are one percent or less of budget costs. Try to name another company that offers what Social Security does at that minimal overhead.

To implement these budget cuts, five Social Security administrative offices in Pennsylvania would be closed along with 15 more offices in other states. Where will these retirees go when they need information on their Benefits, especially in Pennsylvania? Presumably, Republicans hope that retirees will rely on the internet for benefits information. But due to lack of knowledge and monthly income, it is hard for most seniors to navigate online, or to afford internet service.

SOAR members need to know the facts on this issue! This can only happen if we choose to remain silent or not get involved. We cannot sit back as an organization, and we will not allow our retirement security to be threatened without a fight.

Please keep up on the issues and inform our members; after that, the decision is theirs, but at the least, we can feel good about what we have done. **Remember to vote on Election Day and get involved.**

Bill Pienta, SOAR President

No te dejes engañar ...



Siendo esta la última oportunidad antes de las elecciones de noviembre que puedo escribirles, pensé que podría ser valioso darle algo para reflexionar. Los jubilados no deben ser engañados por una reciente propuesta de presupuesto que los proponentes afirman falsamente que será en nuestro beneficio. Después de años de luchar contra los esfuerzos de los políticos que quieren socavar la Seguridad Social, hemos aprendido a no dejarnos engañar por un lenguaje codificado como "cortar el desperdicio" o "sacar al gobierno de su vida". ¡es simplemente una artimaña con el objetivo de privatizar o eliminar la Seguridad Social y Medicare!

Todo lo que brilla no es oro, y a medida que más personas ingresan a la edad de jubilación, el presupuesto republicano propone reducir los fondos para administrar las oficinas del Seguro Social del área. Cuando cierren las oficinas del Seguro Social, los jubilados tendrán más problemas para acceder al Seguro Social y otros servicios vitales. Como resultado, no seremos atendidos tan bien y comenzaremos a creer su tontería de que los jubilados podrían ser mejor atendidos por el sector privado. Sin embargo, eso simplemente no es cierto porque los costos administrativos del Seguro Social son del 1 por ciento o menos de los costos del presupuesto. Trate de nombrar a otra compañía que ofrezca lo que hace el Seguro Social con esa sobrecarga mínima.

Para implementar estos recortes presupuestarios, se cerrarían cinco oficinas administrativas del Seguro Social en Pensilvania junto con otras 15 oficinas en otros estados. ¿A dónde irán estos jubilados cuando necesiten información sobre sus Beneficios, especialmente en Pennsylvania? Presumiblemente, los republicanos esperan que los jubilados dependan de Internet para obtener información sobre beneficios. Pero debido a la falta de conocimiento y ingresos mensuales, es difícil para la mayoría de los jubilados navegar en línea o pagar el servicio de Internet.

¡Los miembros de SOAR necesitan conocer los hechos sobre este tema! Esto solo puede suceder si elegimos permanecer en silencio o no involucrarnos. No podemos sentarnos como organización y no permitiremos que nuestra seguridad de jubilación se vea amenazada sin luchar.

Manténgase informado sobre los problemas e informe a nuestros miembros; después de eso, la decisión es de ellos, pero al menos, podemos sentirnos bien con lo que hemos hecho. **Recuerde votar el día de las elecciones y participar.**

Bill Pienta, presidente de SOAR

Social Security – What’s Open and Honest Behind Closed Doors?



In a September 2019 town hall meeting in Emmet County, Iowa, U.S. Senator Joni Ernst complained, openly, that groups like SOAR are making her job more difficult than she would like.

Regarding the future of Social Security, Senator Ernst said, “We do need to sit down behind closed doors, so we’re not being scrutinized by this group or the other, and just have an open and honest conversation...” “The minute you say we need to address Social Security, the media is hammering you, the opposing party is hammering you — there goes granny over a cliff.” Senator Ernst continued, “We know that there is a point in time when we as Congress will have to address the situation, and I think it’s better done sooner rather

than later, to make sure that we shored up that system.”

When you hear the words, “shore(d) up that system,” and “behind closed doors” – do you get the sense that Senator Ernst wants to expand the benefits of Social Security to more Americans? Do you think Senator Ernst wants to figure out a way for future generations of Americans to be able to retire with dignity?

Or, are you getting flashbacks to contract negotiations from your working years when management wanted to have closed-door talks so they could raid our pension or increase workers’ healthcare contributions? Do you get the sense, like me, that Senator Ernst believes Social Security is an entitlement and not something Americans have earned (even though we certainly have)?

There is a reason Social Security is arguably the most popular legislative achievement in our history.

For many Americans, particularly widowed women, Social Security is the last thing between living with some dignity and absolute poverty. Social Security is a financial investment made by American workers held in trust to assure that retirees, the elderly, people with disabilities, or the children and families of deceased workers will not be abandoned by the richest nation on earth.

If Senator Ernst gets her way, Americans will be having tough conversations with their spouses around empty kitchen tables for years to come. Not because Americans will be living longer lives, but let’s be open and honest here, they won’t be living the lives they anticipated if Social Security is destroyed.

Julie Stein, SOAR Director

Social Security Increase Next Year Not as Much as This Year!

From what I’ve been able to gather, it appears that Social Security beneficiaries will get an estimated 1.6 percent boost in 2020, down from a 2.8 percent increase in 2019. The Social Security Administration is expected to announce the cost-of-living adjustment for 2020 in October. *Charlie*



Veterans Day (originally known as **Armistice Day**) is a [federal holiday in the United States](#) observed annually on November 11, for honoring [military veterans](#), that is, persons who have served in the [United States Armed Forces](#).

Veterans Day is distinct from [Memorial Day](#), a U.S. public holiday in May. Veterans Day celebrates the service of all U.S. military veterans, while Memorial Day honors those who have died while in military service.

There is another military holiday, [Armed Forces Day](#), a minor U.S. remembrance that also occurs in May, which honors those currently serving in the U.S. military.

Source: Wikipedia

Veterans of Steel will be a place in the USW where those who served or who are serving our country can find resources, camaraderie, support and a way to fight for core issues like protecting and creating family-supporting jobs after service. If you are a USW member who's also a military veteran, please visit usw.org/vetsofsteel so we can keep in touch as this program is developed and to get your "Veteran of Steel" sticker.

Members in Canada can go to <https://www.usw.ca/members/veterans-of-steel>

“Buy American” isn’t just a catchy slogan. It’s what every American should look for when purchasing an American flag. It’s a path back to the strength and prosperity that Americans of past generations struggled to achieve.

-Tom Conway, USW Int'l. President

SOAR Chapter Connection

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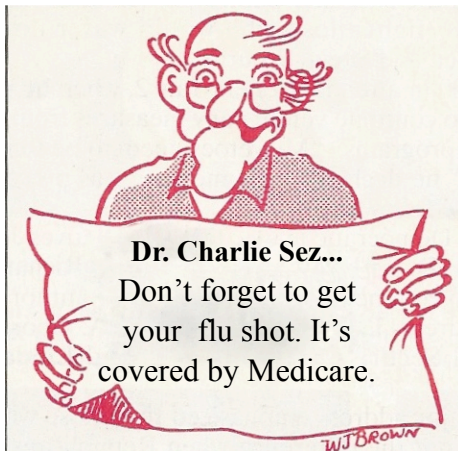
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Elaine Says...



Nothing makes me happier than sitting on my back porch watching Charlie pick green beans. I get a real smile on my face knowing I have a little time to myself to read my book. Plus, the green beans are delicious! Charlie had a bumper crop this year and our freezer is full. They sure will taste good this winter!



Pneumococcal vaccine shots are not a bad idea either. Both are covered by Medicare if your doctor accepts assignment. Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance) covers two different pneumococcal shots. Part B covers the first shot at any time and a different, second shot if it's given at least one year after the first shot.

The McNeil Report

Open Enrollment Period for Medicare Advantage and Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage. What Can I Do?

- Change from Original Medicare to a Medicare Advantage Plan.
- Change from a Medicare Advantage Plan back to Original Medicare.
- Switch from one Medicare Advantage Plan to another Medicare Advantage Plan.
- Switch from a Medicare Advantage Plan that doesn't offer drug coverage to a Medicare Advantage Plan that offers drug coverage.
- Switch from a Medicare Advantage Plan that offers drug coverage to a Medicare Advantage Plan that doesn't offer drug coverage.
- Join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan.
- Switch from one Medicare drug plan to another Medicare drug plan.
- Drop your Medicare prescription drug coverage completely.

When can this be done? October 15 – December 7

House Introduces Comprehensive Legislation to Lower Drug Prices

by Robert Roach, Jr.



Recently, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Democratic leaders released legislation to lower prescription drug costs. The bill, called the “Lower Drug Costs Now Act” (H.R. 3), requires the federal government to negotiate lower prices and administer stiff tax penalties on pharmaceutical corporations that refuse to negotiate.

The plan authorizes the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate on behalf of the American people. Each year the secretary can negotiate for up to 250 of the most expensive drugs available through Medicare, including insulin. The prices agreed upon would be available for all insurers -- not just Medicare.


The plan caps out of pocket prescription drug costs for Medicare beneficiaries at \$2,000 and limits price increases to the rate of inflation for Medicare Parts B and Part D. Currently, there is no cap.

Americans now pay the highest prices for prescription drugs in the world, and this bill will bring U.S. prices more in line with those in other industrialized countries. The House and Senate need to pass this bill and rein in the predatory practices of pharmaceutical corporations.

Allowing Medicare to negotiate prices and capping out of pocket costs will finally provide relief to retirees and others who struggle to afford their medicine.

H.R. 3 will be a giant leap forward if passed by Congress. However, powerful pharmaceutical corporations are fighting it tooth and nail. Lawmakers need to know that their constituents want it passed quickly.

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.



“Out of our first century of national life we evolved the ethical principle that it was not right or just that an honest and industrious man should live and die in misery. He was entitled to some degree of sympathy and security. Our conscience declared against the honest workman's becoming a pauper, but our eyes told us that he very often did.”

— **Frances Perkins**

Well, China Is at It Again



Well, China is at it again. After eliminating the Australian passenger rail and rolling stock industries since its admittance to the World Trade Organization in 2001, China has successfully shut down transportation manufacturing in the domestic market Down Under.

And guess who it is that China has its sights on next?

While China-owned and subsidized public transportation companies rolled through the island continent severely underbidding Australia's domestic manufacturing, it wasn't long before the Aussies could no longer possibly compete with China's mercantilist attitude.

A statement before the House and Senate hashes out their differences in a close-ranging Pentagon Policy. The two chambers will soon meet in a conference committee to work out their differences in the policy bill. The White House supports a Senate provision that would bar all federal transit.

The Senate version of the fiscal 2020 defense authorization bill would bar federal dollars from being used to purchase either passenger railcars or buses from such firms. [The House version of the bill](#) would limit the prohibition only to railcars.

"It is critical that such prohibitions cover procurement of all rolling stock transit vehicles to ensure the nation's economic and national security and to prevent the use of Federal dollars to support foreign state-controlled enterprises," said a statement from the Office of Management and Budget.

Both provisions aim to counter China's increasing presence in the U.S. passenger railcar and electric bus market to prevent possible spying and surveillance of America.

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

What a Shame!

Our union leaders resolve unanimously at every USW Int'l. Convention to encourage local unions to support SOAR by providing the first-year's SOAR membership to all retirees. It's disappointing, then, to run across local unions with officers that have "never heard of such a thing."

Recently, one local union that I visited has had a SOAR chapter since 1997, and it was struggling to exist. After some discussion, the local came to realize that the motion to provide the first-year's SOAR membership to all retirees had somehow been completely forgotten. I'm not sure of the reason; but my guess is, that through a change of officers, that they just hadn't been informed or just didn't think about it.

Charlie



Jim Bickhart, District 4 President of SOAR Chapter 4-1



In keeping with one of the purposes of SOAR, “to better the communities in which you live,” Jim Bickhart along with some of his chapter members and about 100 other residents of Dunkirk, New York, helped clean up the three Dunkirk beaches this summer. They all agreed that it was a very worthwhile project.

“SOAR members in all of our Districts volunteer each and every day in one way or another to help our neighbors and our communities,” said Jim.

In 1967, Jim began working for Allegheny Ludlum as a mill-hand. Not long after he was appointed union steward and held several positions including President of USWA Local 2693. In 1985 he went on USWA Staff and retired in 2003. He is a 24-year veteran of the United States Naval Reserve.

Jim served as a USW District 4 SOAR Coordinator for a number of years, and was elected to the SOAR Int’l. Executive Board at the 2008 SOAR Conference. He held that position until he retired from the board in 2016. Jim continues to serve as a SOAR Coordinator for the district.

Jim and his lovely wife Theresa have been married 51 years and have two grown children and a whole bunch of grandchildren and great grandchildren. Besides raking beaches, Jim enjoys golf and other community activities.

The SOAR Executive Board will be attending the 2019 USW Rapid Response & Legislative Conference and will take part in a lobbying effort on Capitol Hill to address three issues that we all should be concerned about. Contact your U.S. Representatives encouraging them to support and vote for:

- The Workplace Violence Prevention for Healthcare and Social Services Workers Act (S.851)
- The Butch Lewis Act (S.2254)
- The Pro Act: Protecting the Right to Organize (S.1306)