

USW@Work

A Regular Publication of the United Steelworkers

Volume 20/2

A Powerful Voice for Workers



SOAR Members Set Course for Future



More than 130 members of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees set an agenda of activism and advocacy for the coming years at the SOAR conference this April.

The event, held April 4th and 5th at the Caesars Forum in Las Vegas, just prior to the opening of the USW International Constitutional Convention, came just as the organization is celebrating the 40th anniversary of its founding in 1985, an effort that was led by then-International President Lynn Williams.

“Lynn Williams had a vision for an activist organization of retirees,” said SOAR Vice President Doug MacPherson. “He set out in that vision three challenges for us.”

Those challenges, MacPherson said, included a directive to support USW members and the larger labor movement in their struggles, to improve the communities where

SOAR members live, and to help to educate and mobilize members on legislative issues.

“I’m pleased and proud that for the last 40 years, the people in this room, and the people that preceded them, got up every morning and tried to give life to that vision that Lynn had,” MacPherson told the SOAR delegation. “I’m sure he would be proud of what we’ve accomplished.”

SOAR Victories

Those accomplishments have included defending quality, affordable health care for retirees and active workers in both the United States and Canada, as well as fighting for secure retirements for all workers. In the United States, that fight paid off with the passage of the Butch Lewis Act in 2021. That measure, a longtime union priority, saved more than 130 distressed pension plans and secured the retirements of more than 1.3

million workers, including more than 100,000 USW members.

In addition, in Canada, SOAR members were instrumental in passing the Westray law, making it easier to prosecute company management if a worker dies on the job due to their negligence.

MacPherson credited former Canadian National Director Lawrence McBrearty, also a longtime SOAR activist, for leading that fight.

“That would be the legacy of Lawrence’s contribution to this union,” he said. “It was a lifetime of work. He would not back down.”



Lawrence McBrearty

Continuing the Fight

SOAR President Bill Pienta said the organization’s members must now step up the fight to preserve

continued on page 4





BILL PIENTA
SOAR President

Don't Be Fooled by the Smoke Screens

Having just returned from the SOAR Conference and USW Convention, I could easily write an article that would fill many pages, but I will focus on a few critical issues that are important to us.

At the SOAR Conference, the delegates heard from Jessica LaPointe, the President of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Council 220, representing employees of the Social Security Administration (SSA). I had the fortunate opportunity to have lunch with Jessica, where we continued our discussion about the ongoing dismantling of Social Security offices across the country.

Anyone who has tried to contact a representative from the SSA can attest to how difficult it can be. I was informed that this situation would only worsen with the massive reduction of employees at that agency caused by the imposed layoffs.

The inability to speak with someone for assistance will only increase our frustration, and it could lead to a solution favored by those who have long opposed Social Security: "PRIVATIZATION."

I would like to share my recent experience with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) regarding a letter I received.

The letter informed me about a change in a benefit I was receiving, but did not specify which benefit it referred to. It instructed me to contact CMS for clarification. After a lengthy wait, I finally spoke with a

representative. After I read the letter to him, he acknowledged that he did not have any information about my issue, but reassured me that it didn't seem too serious.

When I asked him if he was concerned about the layoffs, he replied that he wasn't worried because he was a contracted employee. Although he could not assist me, he assured me he would keep his job.

During that call, he inadvertently changed my preference regarding the sharing of medical information without my authorization. What purpose did he serve other than to frustrate callers who needed help?

Afterward, I received another letter from CMS notifying me of this change in preference, which I did not authorize. This prompted me to call again. After waiting 34 minutes, I finally spoke with a government employee, rather than a sub-contract employee, who corrected the error and provided answers to my initial question.

What does my experience with the CMS have to do with the thousands of employees laid off at the Social Security Administration? My concern is the heightened frustration that recipients like me will face when trying to get help—all in the name of reducing costs.

Don't be fooled. Stay aware of this smokescreen: The current federal administration isn't just looking to cut costs; it aims to privatize Social Security. Privatization removes the security from Social Security. If we don't speak up and fight back, we risk ending up with a system that goes against our true needs.



Celebrating
40 YEARS OF ACTIVISM
STAYING ACTIVE. STAYING INVOLVED. STAYING CONNECTED.



JULIE STEIN
SOAR Director

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Changes to Social Security Fuel Concern Among Recipients and Advocates

In recent months, Social Security recipients and their advocates have been voicing concerns about the Trump administration's plan to gut more than 7,000 jobs across the Social Security Administration and how it will impact retirees' ability to receive their monthly benefit checks.

While the administration again claims this is in the name of efficiency, its allegations of waste, fraud and abuse within the agency have already been proven to be untrue.

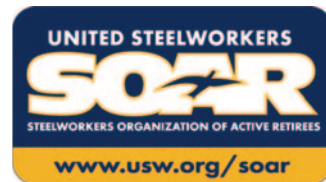
For example, last July, the social security administration's inspector general released a report that showed less than one percent of the payments authorized by the agency from 2015 to 2022 were deemed as "improper."

Even so, in March, Musk-led DOGE, announced even more changes that will impact millions of Americans who have paid into Social Security over the course of their working lives, limiting access and effectively curtailing benefits.

Here are just a few of the many SSA changes announced in March:

- ▶ **New requirement for in-person identity checks:** The administration has moved to require in-person identity checks for all new SSA applicants along with anyone who wants to change their direct deposit information. This change will prove to be particularly cumbersome, given the fact that in-person options are limited and shrinking.
- ▶ **Dozens of SSA Offices Closing Nationwide:** The administration plans to shutter nearly 50 Social Security offices in 18 states, with the majority of the closings in the South and Southeast; and,
- ▶ **Discontinuing SSA Payments by Paper Check:** Nearly 500,000 Social Security recipients will no longer be able to receive their monthly benefit by paper check as of September.

While the Trump administration made many promises to leave Social Security untouched, these unnecessary and baseless changes will create significant challenges for millions of America's elderly and most vulnerable.




SOAR in ACTION

USW@Work

Published as an edition to *USW@Work* for the United Steelworkers
60 Blvd. of the Allies
Pittsburgh, PA 15222


Winner of ICLA's
journalistic competition
awards for General Excellence
in 1986, 1990 and 1993



Julie Stein, Editor
Jay McMurrin, Copy Editor
Eric Russell, Copy Editor

Address editorial material to:
Editor, *USW@Work*, *SOAR in Action*
United Steelworkers
60 Blvd. of the Allies
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Send address changes only to:
USW Membership Department
60 Blvd. of the Allies
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Or E-mail: MEMBERSHIP@USW.ORG



When submitting an address change, please include address label from last issue.

USW@Work (ISSN 0883-3141) is published four times a year by the United Steelworkers AFL-CIO-CLC, 60 Blvd. of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222. Subscriptions to non-members: \$12 for one year; \$20 for two years. Periodicals postage paid at Pittsburgh, PA and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: **USW@Work**, USW Membership Dept., 60 Blvd. of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222.

On May 23, 1985, at the Union's 30th International Convention, USW delegates voted unanimously to add an amendment to the USW Constitution recognizing SOAR as an affiliate organization of the USW.



SOAR Members Set Cou

continued from page 1

retirement programs like Social Security and Medicare, particularly as those funds are under fire from an administration intent on making massive cuts to government spending.

“We don’t stop when we retire,” Pienta told the delegation. “Every day, we just keep moving along.”

The SOAR delegates adopted a series of resolutions during the course of the two-day conference,



David McCall

reaffirming their commitment to ongoing efforts to strengthen pension protections, safeguard health care rights, and combat harmful cuts to the social safety net. This commitment includes vital programs such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, the Canada Pension Plan, and Old Age Security.

Additionally, other passed resolutions aimed to raise awareness about voter suppression laws that disproportionately affect young people, minorities, and retirees, along with other efforts to support long-standing USW priorities.

A Stronger Union

Having retired members actively engaged in the union’s efforts makes the USW stronger in workplaces and communities all across North America, International President David McCall said in his address to the SOAR delegation.

“I’m old enough to be a member of SOAR, and I am,” said McCall, who joined the USW executive board in 1998. McCall became a SOAR member in 2019 when the organization amended its bylaws to welcome individuals aged 45 and over to join without the requirement to be retired.

McCall took a moment during his remarks to recognize a number of members of that board that he had served with during his tenure who are now active SOAR leaders, including Pienta, the former District 4 director, former District 10 Director Bobby “Mac” McAuliffe, former District 2 Director Michael Bolton, former District 13 Director Ruben Garza, former District 4 Director Del Vitale, and former Canadian National Director Ken Neumann.

Leading the Way

McCall said that, as USW members prepared to gather for their conven-

tion, they would lean heavily on the lessons they learned from the USW leaders who came before them.

“The most powerful voice in our union is the voice of our members. It’s their concerns that will move us forward,” McCall said. “Many of them know what they know today from many of the contributions that all of you have made.”

The international president noted that he had worked with every USW leader since I.W. Abel in the 1970s, and that the fights that the union is having today for fair trade and strong domestic manufacturing, as well as labor rights and secure retirements, are not that different than they were then.

McCall called Williams, the former international president and former SOAR president, “the smartest man in the world. He had such a strategic voice about how we could defend our rights.”

SOAR members and active USW members must continue to work together to defend those rights and secure good jobs for future generations, he said.

“They were not only huge minds, but huge hearts as well,” McCall said of his predecessors. “I want to walk in their footsteps, as all of us should.”



Doug MacPherson



Bill Pienta



Myles Sullivan

erse for Future

SOAR members set the best example for younger workers of how to do that, he said.

“We need a little more fairness and a little more justice in this world,” McCall told the SOAR gathering. “And as long as you’re out there, we’ll win those fights.”

International Secretary-Treasurer Myles Sullivan also addressed the conference. In his remarks, he thanked the delegates for their “service, sacrifice and for the work they do.” Sullivan said, “We stand with you, shoulder to shoulder, in our fight for economic justice. You’re an integral part in what we do. SOAR is not just an asset; it is a tremendous asset for our union.”

Special Guests, Additional Top USW Leaders Address the Conference

Rich Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance for Retired Americans, spoke to the delegates about the importance of the senior vote in the 2026 mid-term elections. He told them that because retirees vote in higher numbers than the rest of the population, they have the power to swing elections. He discussed how retirees voted in the last election and

stressed that the percentage of union retirees voting for the pro-retiree Democratic candidate was far greater than non-union retirees.

In Canada, noting that with the upcoming federal elections to take place at the end of the month, in his remarks, Canadian National Director Marty Warren urged SOAR members to get involved and stay involved in the union’s organizing and political work. “Politics matter. How we elect people matters,” Warren said. “Wherever you go, when the Steelworkers walk in a room, it matters. To make a difference, we must get involved and stay involved.”

After hearing from various speakers, including USW district directors, during the two-day conference, members participated in a roundtable discussion titled “Where Do We Go from Here?” This conversation focused on the political dynamics in the United States and how our union is actively pushing back against these challenges. The discussion was led by USW political and legislative leaders, including International Vice President Roxanne Brown, who oversees the union’s legislative and political initiatives in Washington, D.C.



Rich Fiesta



Marty Warren



Roxanne Brown



NEW SOAR LEADERS

Before adjourning, delegates observed USW Vice President Kevin Mapp administering the oath of office to the newly elected SOAR leaders who will serve for the next three years. The officers and executive board members are as follows:

President

Bill Pienta

Vice President

Doug MacPherson

Vice President (West)

Joel Buchanan

Secretary-Treasurer

Denise Edwards

Emeritus: Charlie Averill

Emeritus: Jay McMurran

Emeritus: Scott Marshall

District 1: Ronnie Wardrup

District 3: Monty Bartlett

District 4: Al Polk

District 5: Pierre Arseneau

District 6: Lena Sutton*

District 7: Dorine Godinez

District 8: Ronnie Watson

District 9: Claude Karr

District 10: David Harvey

District 11: Bonnie Carey

District 12: Catherine Houston

District 13: Ruben Garza

SOAR Director: Julie Stein

***Canadian National**

Coordinator: Lena Sutton

DON'T LOSE FAITH in the NDP

Canadian Federal Election 2025

By Lena Sutton, National SOAR Co-ordinator

I am proud of our USW Canadian National Director and district directors for endorsing and supporting the election and re-election of New Democrat MPs to the House of Commons in Ottawa. As National SOAR Co-ordinator I shared the same endorsement.

As I reflected on our loss of party status in the House of Commons in only electing seven NDP MPs, I thought of the late Tommy Douglas, the NDP's first federal leader, who said: "When we build a society based on greed, selfishness and ruthless competition, the fruits we can expect to reap are economic insecurity at home and international discord abroad."

This is true today on both sides of our border. Many Canadians, especially trade unionists and retirees, did not vote for the NDP because of the fear of Trumpism in Canada with the tariff conflict and the threat to Canadian sovereignty.

Jagmeet Singh and the NDP accomplished many gains for workers and retirees in the last minority Liberal government. The NDP took on corporate greed, to make life more affordable and stand strong for Canada. The NDP pushed the government and won anti-scab laws for federal workers, pharmacare, paving the way to universal drug coverage, pension protection, dental care for seniors and those earning under \$90,000.

Liberals can't be trusted. Over and over, they break their promises. The Conservatives are no friends of workers or retirees. Under Conservative Prime Minister



Lena Sutton, SOAR National Co-ordinator and SOAR Executive Board Member for District 6, participating in the 2025 SOAR Executive Board Meeting and Conference in Las Vegas.

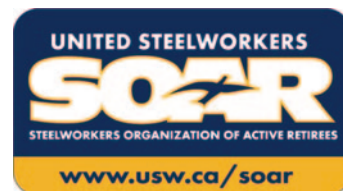
Stephen Harper, Pierre Poilievre was a key minister and voted to push back retirement age to 67. Like the Liberals, the Conservatives voted in favour of back-to-work laws.

During legal strikes and lockouts Jagmeet Singh and the NDP were on picket lines supporting workers not voting against them in the House of Commons.

During this election campaign, Jagmeet and the NDP campaigned to improve worker legislation, doubling the income supplement for seniors, more investment in affordable housing, retirement and long-term care homes.

The NDP made seniors' health care a priority, sought to reduce isolation and tackle senior poverty. Let's not lose faith in our party.

While I am disappointed with the election results, I turn to the words of another NDP leader, the late Jack Layton: "My friends, love is better than anger; hope is better than fear; optimism is better than despair. So let us be loving, hopeful and optimistic, and we'll change the world."



SOAR Grieves the Loss of Former SOAR President **CONNIE ENTREKIN**



Connie Lee Entrekin, 86, who served as director of District 9 from 2003 to 2006 and later went on to serve as president of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR), died on April 7, 2025, at the age of 86.

A Marine Corps veteran, he began his career in 1959 in Gadsden, Alabama, as a laborer in the shipping

department of the pipe mill at Republic Steel and a member of Local 4382.

Entrekin went on to become president of his local in 1968 and president of the Gadsden Labor Council in 1970. He also served as executive vice president and PAC director for the Alabama AFL-CIO.

In 1977, he went to work as a staff representative for the Steelworkers, servicing members in the Gulf Coast region for what was then District 36, which later became part of District 9.

Entrekin was named the assistant director of District 9 in 1996 and, in 2003, was named district director upon the retirement of Homer Wilson.

At the time, then-International President Leo Gerard called Connie “an experienced leader, respected by the members for his convictions and knowledge.”

As director, Connie chaired negotiations for Rexam Can North America and Ball Container and was secretary of negotiations for Crown, Cork and Seal.

In October 2006, Entrekin stepped down as director to become a special assistant to the international president and was succeeded by Stan Johnson.

In 2006, the Alabama Organized Labor Awards Foundation named Entrekin their “Labor Person of the Year” for his dedication and service to working families in Alabama. He retired in September of 2007.



Archive photo — USW International President Leo W. Gerard (left) administers the oath of office from the union constitution to install Connie Entrekin (center) as the new president of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR), while retiring SOAR President Lynn R. Williams (right) looks on. (September 2007)

Gerard then appointed Entrekin to serve as SOAR president following the retirement of then-SOAR President Lynn Williams. Entrekin served in this leadership role until his “second” retirement in July 2013 and was succeeded by Bill Pienta.

Soon after, Gerard honored him with the title of SOAR President Emeritus, a role he retained while serving the SOAR Executive Board until his passing.

He is survived by the love of his life and wife of 64 years, Barbara Entrekin, as well as a son, five grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren and numerous family members.

He will be greatly missed by all who were privileged to know him.



Archive photo — Entrekin steps down, Pienta takes the reins as SOAR president. Pictured left to right: Ken Neumann, USW national director for Canada; Stan Johnson, USW Int'l secretary-treasurer; Bill Pienta, SOAR president; Leo W. Gerard, USW Int'l president; C. L. “Connie” Entrekin, SOAR president emeritus; and Fred Redmond, USW vice president human affairs. (July 2013)

May he rest as he served ~ in solidarity and peace.

SOAR in ACTION



PUEBLO, CO—SOAR Chapter 38-3 “Albert Al Becco SOAR Chapter” led by president, Joel Buchanan showing solidarity for the USPS workers in the “U.S. Mail is NOT for Sale” protest rally held Sunday, March 24, 2025, in Pueblo, Colorado.

Community members and union leaders from across the country are saying ‘Hell No’ to postal privatization! To each and every SOAR member who took the time to attend one of the nationally held rallies, spread the word, and advocate for the USPS—your commitment does not go unnoticed. You are making a difference and helping to ensure that the USPS remains a public service for generations to come. Way to go, SOAR!

In the photo from left to right are: Front: Chuck Perko, Joel Buchanan, Fred Trujillo, and Pam DiFatta. Back: Dakota Lamoureux, and Gary St. Clair.



Lou Luckhardt and Lewis Fulbright

Dallas, TX—On March 20, 2025, thousands of American Postal Workers Union (APWU) members and community supporters took to the streets to say, “Hands Off Our Public Postal Service.” With over 250 events nationwide, we made our message loud and clear: selling off the public postal service would harm both service quality and our communities. SOAR Chapter 13-6 activists Lawrence Castillo, Lou Luckhardt, and Lewis Fulbright are pictured in the “U.S. Mail is NOT for Sale” National Day of Action in Dallas, standing in solidarity with APWU members. Luckhardt serves as the chapter’s president.



Laverne, TN—On March 11, 2025, members of SOAR Chapter 9-UR9, also known as the SOAR Retirees of Middle Tennessee, held their chapter meeting and took this fantastic photo proudly displaying their SOAR flag! The members are retirees of USW Local 01055L, and they meet at the local’s union hall on the second Tuesday of every odd month. Lou Patterson (the retiree holding the right side of the SOAR flag and wearing a SOAR ball cap) serves as the Chapter’s president. Thank you for everything you ALL do for SOAR! In solidarity!



Las Vegas, NV—On Saturday, April 5, a protest titled “Hands Off! Las Vegas Fights Back” took place in front of the New York New York Hotel on the Las Vegas Strip.

Organizers of the protest said, “Donald Trump and Elon Musk think this country belongs to them. Las Vegas is fighting back.” They described the event as a “mass mobilization day” intended to send a message to the world.

The nationwide “Hands Off!” protests were a response to the Trump administration’s policies, particularly its collaboration with Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). These protests aimed to unite Americans across the country to march, rally, and demand an end to what the organizers described as “chaos,” as well as to build a movement opposing “the looting of our country.”



The protests involved a broad coalition of over 150 groups, including progressive organizations, labor unions, pro-democracy advocates, civil rights activists, LGBTQ+ organizations, and women’s rights groups.

SOAR activists attending the 2025 International SOAR Conference in Las Vegas took part in these protests. Pictured at the demonstration are Mike Zielski (D8), Tammie Botelho (D4), Catherine Houston (D12), Priscilla Marco (D4), and Chuck Perko (D12). Way to go, SOAR!



Davenport, IA—Activists of SOAR Chapter 11-4 attended the AFL-CIO Town Hall Public Hearing on April 22, in Davenport, sponsored by the Iowa Federation of Labor. The town hall featured AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Fred Redmond and other speakers. “We heard great testimony on how the chaos and cuts from the Trump/Musk administration are impacting Iowa families,” stated Chapter 11-4 President Bonnie Carey. “Our Iowa representatives MUST stand up and protect working families, retirees, students, veterans and the programs we all rely on!” SOAR was in the house making their voices heard! Way to go SOAR!

In the photo from left to right are: SOAR Chapter 11-4 Vice President Brad Greve, Fred Redmond and Bonnie Carey.



Renewed Legislation Aims to Reel in China's Trade Cheating by Passing **LEVEL the PLAYING FIELD ACT 2.0**

As part of the plan to reel in China's trade cheating, Congress is equipped to help American businesses by passing the Level the Playing Field Act 2.0 (LTPFA) which was reintroduced in 2025 by Senators Todd Young (R-Ind.) and Tina Smith (D-Minn.).

Initially, the Level the Playing Field Act 2.0 was put before the nation's legislative bodies in 2023 to update a 2021 bill that passed both the Senate and the House.

The proposed bill would further modernize United States trade law to counteract evolving unfair trade actions from China. The Act provides a mechanism to counteract "cross-border" subsidies such as China's Belt and Road Initiative which provides subsidies to China-based or China operated companies doing business in countries outside of China.

LTPFA 2.0's trade enforcement boost is indeed needed. As tariffs aim to squash trade cheating, bad actors have found new tricks. Chinese companies looking for ways to dodge tariffs have expanded production to Vietnam, Indonesia and Thailand.

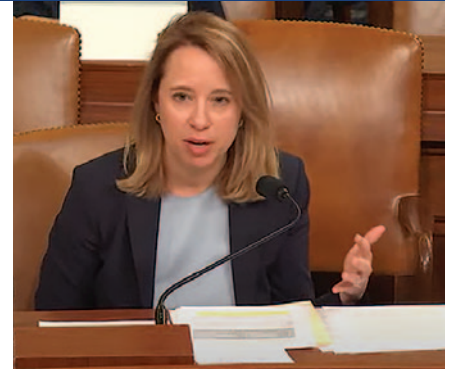
Outward direct investment from China into the manufacturing

industry in a bloc of Southeast Asian countries was about \$9.1 billion in 2023, up from approximately \$4.5 billion in 2018 according to China's Ministry of Commerce.

The LTPFA 2.0 would improve the U.S. trade remedy system and respond to repeat offenders and serial cheaters. It strengthens America's ability to establish "successive investigations," making it easier for petitioners to bring new trade cases when repeat offenders move production to another country.

Greta Peisch, who served as General Counsel for the Biden administration's office of the USTR, told a congressional committee that the bill "is the next front in combating China's tactics of moving production from one country to another and subsidizing producers in third countries."

About half of the unfair trade cases are in the steel industry. These unfair trade cases, however, also affect industries that make



"Leveling the Playing Field Act 2.0 addresses these urgent issues and promises to help solve them by providing us with more tools in our toolbox," stated Greta Peisch, a partner at Wiley Rein LLP, during her testimony before the U.S. House Ways and Means Trade Subcommittee on American Trade Enforcement Subcommittees on Tuesday, February 25. (Screenshot from Ways & Means Committee Republicans YouTube)

engines, furniture, hardwood, plywood, pipes, tubes, magnesium, tires, and many others.

The Alliance for American Manufacturing urges all SOAR members to contact their U.S. Senators and U.S. House of Representative members and ask them to support the LTPFA 2.0 and bring it to the floor. You can phone them at their District and State offices or reach them in Washington, D.C. by calling the U.S. Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and asking for your representative's office.

Steelworkers are most familiar with the dumping of cheap Chinese steel into the U.S. market and the LTPFA 2.0 could go a long way in offering relief to American steelmakers.

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



SOAR in ACTION:

The Fight for a Dignified Retirement Isn't Over



It was an honor spending time with our SOAR members during our April Convention. Your commitment to our movement and to each other continues to inspire us all. And as always, your activism is not just appreciated—it is essential. Right now, that solidarity and vigilance are needed more than ever.

We are seeing a wave of legislative and policy decisions that could deeply undermine the dignity and security we fought for in retirement. These developments are not abstract—they could hit directly at your health care, your earned benefits, and the services so many of us rely on. Here's what you need to know:

Medicare and Health care Under Threat

Project 2025: A Backdoor Attack on Medicare: A dangerous proposal under Project 2025 aims to make Medicare Advantage the default for all new Medicare enrollees. These private plans often restrict access to trusted doctors and hospitals, limit coverage, and come with hidden costs. Worse, they cost the Medicare program more, threatening its financial future—and the care we've all earned.

Slashing Home Health Services: Since 2021, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has been pushing a nearly nine percent cut in reimbursements for

home health services. With more of us aging at home, this is a reckless move. Providers may be forced to cut back or shut down services, just when demand is rising and our care needs are increasing.

Social Security and Financial Security at Risk

Raising the Full Retirement Age: The Republican Study Committee's 2025 budget proposes raising the full retirement age from 67 to 69. That's a direct cut to benefits—up to \$8,892 per year for some retirees. We worked our whole lives for these benefits. Now, they're trying to move the goalpost.

Immigration Policy That Hurts Social Security: Policies calling for mass deportations could gut the workforce that pays into Social Security and Medicare. Fewer workers means less revenue—putting more pressure on our programs and risking benefit cuts for all of us.

Vital Senior Services on the Chopping Block

Aging Services Under Attack: The House Appropriations Committee has proposed steep cuts to programs seniors depend on:

Meals for Seniors: \$37 million cut to congregate and home-delivered meal programs—this means more older adults going hungry.

Job Training: Elimination of the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), which helps low-income seniors find meaningful work.

Fall Prevention: Complete removal of funding for programs that help prevent falls—the leading cause of injury in older adults.

Adult Protective Services: Deep cuts to the programs that protect against elder abuse and neglect.

Barriers to Social Security Access

New Restrictions on Accessing Benefits: Starting March 31, 2025, you will no longer be able to access your Social Security benefits by phone. Instead, you'll need to go online or visit a field office in person. For many seniors—especially in rural areas—this creates huge obstacles. Not everyone has internet or transportation. This is an unnecessary and unfair burden on our community.

What We Must Do

We fought too long and too hard to let our retirement security be chipped away by backdoor cuts and policy rollbacks. This is a critical time to stay engaged, stay informed, and keep up the pressure on lawmakers at every level.

We urge you to speak out, contact your representatives, and support legislation that defends and expands—not weakens—our rights and benefits. We must remain united. We must remain active. The fight for dignity in retirement is not over—and together, we will not back down.

As always, thank you to our SOAR members for all your hard work and activism in Rapid Response to ensure every worker has the ability to retire with dignity.



We Must Protect the Progress on Lower Drug Prices

By Robert Roach, Jr.

In 2022, after two decades of tireless advocacy, Congress finally passed a law allowing Medicare to negotiate lower drug prices—a monumental step toward making prescriptions more affordable for older Americans. But that progress is now at risk.

A new executive order signed just days ago includes a provision that could roll back this critical reform. It directs the Department of Health and Human Services to work with Congress to delay when certain medications become eligible for Medicare price negotiations.

Let me be clear: delaying these negotiations doesn't help seniors—it helps Big Pharma.

Allowing Medicare to negotiate prices is a win for taxpayers and patients. Too many seniors have faced impossible choices between paying for medicine or other essentials. The negotiation law was a lifeline—finally shifting power away from drug companies and toward people who rely on these medications.

Yes, the executive order includes a few modest changes, like reducing co-pays for some cancer treatments and expanding access to discounted insulin and epinephrine for low-income patients. But these small steps pale in comparison to the damage done by weakening Medicare's negotiating authority.

Drug companies have fought hard to stop this law. Pfizer and Eli Lilly—both of which are suing to block Medicare negotiations—held private meetings with President Trump and HHS Secretary Robert Kennedy earlier this year. Now, they may be getting exactly what they wanted.

It remains to be seen whether Congress will agree to this setback. We must not let that happen.

Robert Roach, Jr. is president of the Alliance for Retired Americans. He was previously the General Secretary-Treasurer of the IAMAW.

For more information, visit www.retiredamericans.org.



SOAR in ACTION *continued from page 8*

St. Paul, MN—On March 26, 2025, USW District 11 held its second annual Minnesota Lobby Day at the Minnesota state capitol. Members from SOAR Chapter 11-5 in Duluth and SOAR Chapter 33-7 in Minneapolis joined the delegation of steelworkers in St. Paul, where they met with legislators of their district.

Recent news about the devastating layoffs coming to the Iron Range members brought much to talk about with MN legislators. Participants also focused on key issues such as protecting the earned sick and safe time law and expanding the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for workers across the state. Activists met with state representatives and senators to distribute informational materials and raise awareness, as both of these issues are currently under threat from right-wing attacks.



Standing at the capitol steps: From left, SOAR Chapter 33-7 activist Gary Evenson, Chapter 33-7 President Gerry Parzino and Chapter 11-5 President Lee Popovich. SOAR was in the house!



Dover, OH—USW Local 2737 is committed to establishing a new SOAR chapter for the retirees of their local union. On April 28, District 1 SOAR Executive Board Member Ronnie "Pup" Wardrup and SOAR Coordinator Dave "Zeke" Janiszewski met with the officers and members from USW Local 2737 to discuss the SOAR program. Dusty Kinsey serves as president of the local union. We look forward to the establishment of another SOAR chapter in District 1 soon. Way to go SOAR in District 1!



USW Membership Department
60 Blvd. of the Allies
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

The Union Plus Pet Savings Program **WORKS FOR ME**



"We take advantage of the benefits.
My philosophy is it's foolish to not get
discounts when you can."
— union member



See more at
unionplus.org/usw

