

# FRIDAY ALERT



**Alliance for Retired Americans**

815 16th Street, NW, Fourth Floor • Washington, DC 20006 • 202.637.5399  
[www.retiredamericans.org](http://www.retiredamericans.org) • [aracommunications@retiredamericans.org](mailto:aracommunications@retiredamericans.org)

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## **Paul Ryan's Republican Budget Passes the House, Despite Threats Posed to Seniors**

The U.S. House of Representatives voted to pass **Paul Ryan's** Republican Budget for fiscal year 2014 on Thursday, 221-207. It was a mostly party-line vote, with only 10 Republicans voting against it, and no Democrats voting for it. For a full tally, go to <http://tinyurl.com/atg588r>. Ryan's plan would fast-track cuts to Social Security, gut Medicaid and dismantle the Medicare program – all while giving \$5.7 trillion in new tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations. To see the Alliance's letter to House members listing the ways in which the budget would hurt seniors, go to <http://tinyurl.com/buazaea>. If you have not done so already, please sign the petition expressing your disapproval of the Paul Ryan budget here: <http://bit.ly/YdAmr6>.

**Diane Fleming**, a retired member of the International Association of Machinists who, along with her 92-year-old mother, is a Medicare beneficiary, spoke at a Capitol Hill press conference on Wednesday that drew attention to the many problems with the Republican budget. Because Ryan's plan also calls for the repeal of health care reform, Ms. Fleming highlighted the imminent three-year anniversary (tomorrow, March 23) of the Affordable Care Act. Members of Congress at the event included Minority Leader **Nancy Pelosi** (CA), Democratic Whip **Steny Hoyer** (MD), Assistant Democratic Leader **James Clyburn** (SC), Democratic Caucus Chair **Xavier Becerra** (CA), Caucus Vice Chair **Joseph Crowley** (NY), and Rep. **John Dingell** (MI).

In separate action, the House and Senate reached agreement on Thursday to fund the federal government through September, avoiding a government shutdown. However, the bill leaves in place the machinery of sequestration cuts that took effect on March 1, and the bill does not add funding that many Democrats wanted to implement health care and Wall Street reforms.

## **Wednesday, March 20: A Day of Action Against the Sequester**

Wednesday was a national Day of Action to protest the effects of sequestration – including a growing backlog for new claims, headed toward 1,000,000 - for the Social Security Administration. Alliance members were out in full force, and the evidence was found at State Capitols, in print and on television screens. The day was “Senior Day” at the Capitol in Denver for Colorado State Alliance President **Frank Lay**, state chapter members and their allies. Joining the Colorado Alliance were the Central Presbyterian Church, the Colorado Commission on Aging, and others. See video from the Pennsylvania Alliance's presence in Lebanon, PA at <http://tinyurl.com/blfz7dz>.

In addition, Arizona Alliance President **Doug Hart** was interviewed by the Phoenix ABC affiliate on Wednesday. The New Mexico Alliance joined up with AFSCME, AFGE, the Sierra Club, and other coalition partners to protest both sequestration and the Ryan budget in Albuquerque. In Omaha, Fox's Channel 42 and ABC's Channel 7 covered the Nebraska Alliance's protest. In Dallas, Texas Alliance President **Gene Lantz** was interviewed by the local CBS affiliate. Go to <http://youtu.be/46RohY1nVf0> to see video from Dallas; go to <http://tinyurl.com/cqxoeah> for more.

“So many of our states were active on Wednesday – this list is not meant to be exhaustive,” said **Barbara J. Easterling**, President of the Alliance. “I want to thank everyone who joined together to make such a strong statement about sequestration, the Paul Ryan budget, and the impact that combination will have on seniors.”

### **Alliance Supports Nomination of Thomas E. Perez for Labor Secretary**

President **Barack Obama** announced on Monday that he is nominating **Thomas E. Perez** to be his next Secretary of the Department of Labor. Mr. Perez, currently the head of the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, is a longtime champion of labor causes. During his time as head of the Maryland Department of Labor, he championed legislation that stopped bosses from cheating their workers out of full pay and benefits by classifying them as “independent contractors.” The bill was signed into law in 2009, earning Perez high praise from union leaders. Perez has also been an advocate for many other causes, including protecting the rights of domestic workers and fighting back against restrictive voter ID laws. For more, go to *Mother Jones*’s take on the nomination at <http://tinyurl.com/atlej28>.

“Thomas Perez’s record clearly shows that he will promote policies that help workers achieve stable retirements,” said **Ruben Burks**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “We are also encouraged by his strong opposition to voter ID laws, which discriminate against seniors.”

### **Wisconsin Alliance Holds Its State Convention, Elects a New President**

The Wisconsin Alliance held its State Convention in Madison on Monday, drawing more than 130 delegates. Those in attendance also held a press conference protesting sequestration, with two local television stations and several radio stations covering the event. Ms. Easterling and **Rich Fiesta**, Director of the Department of Government and Political Affairs for the Alliance, spoke at the convention. Outgoing State President **Leon Burzynski** was honored and given a framed resolution for his years of service. See the video from Wisconsin at <http://tinyurl.com/cfsqces>.

“Thank you, Leon, for your devotion to the Wisconsin Alliance, and to seniors everywhere,” said **Edward F. Coyle**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “Your colleagues have all enjoyed working with you immensely, and it is because of you that the state chapter is so strong.”

**Mike Pyne**, a Steelworkers retiree, was elected to serve as the new President. “I am pleased to be the state President at a time when this state’s retirees have so much on the line. I will work tirelessly to make sure that Wisconsin’s workers, both in the public and private sector, do not have their rights and benefits further threatened,” said Mr. Pyne.

### **Florida, Iowa Alliance State Presidents Make the Local TV News – Watch the Video**

After organizing three press events in the last week, Florida Alliance President **Tony Fransetta** was interviewed by West Palm Beach’s local NBC affiliate last Friday regarding the affordable housing crisis for seniors in the state. Check out the story here: <http://tinyurl.com/d89ess3>. Iowa President **Janice Laue**’s interview concerning the Iowa Governor’s unsavory alternative to Medicaid expansion, which aired on Des Moines’ local ABC affiliate, is here: <http://tinyurl.com/c93htan>.

*Editor’s Note: Due to Good Friday, the next Friday Alert will be published on Thursday, March 28.*