



March 1, 2013

Contact: David Blank (202) 637-5275 / dblank@retiredamericans.org

Sequester Leaves Seniors in the Cold

Washington, D.C. --- Across-the-board budget cuts that take effect today in the sequester will affect senior citizens across the country.

The failure of the Senate to pass the American Family Economic Protection Act (S. 388), which would have raised revenue from the wealthiest Americans and corporations who send jobs overseas, means that many seniors will face cuts to programs and services they need. Without the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) assistance, many seniors will not be able to pay their heating bills. Without transportation service assistance to help them perform vital tasks like going to the doctor or picking up prescriptions, many retirees will face hardship.

While key programs such as Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid benefits, are untouched by the sequester, the Social Security Administration (SSA), which administers the benefits, is not. Cuts to the SSA budget will make it more difficult to pay beneficiaries correctly and to promptly correct mistakes. Already, years of budget cuts and hiring freezes have affected Social Security's ability to handle workload increases, and the additional cuts required under sequestration will cause further erosion. Office hours nationwide have been already slashed by 23 percent causing in-person meetings and telephone interviews to be significantly delayed.

The Alliance for Retired Americans will keep a close eye on future budget discussions and work to ensure that Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid are not unjustly targeted to balance a budget deficit they did not create. It's time for our country to take on the deficit fairly. That means raising revenues from those who can afford it. We must keep our nation's promises to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

###

The Alliance for Retired Americans is a national organization that advocates for the rights and well-being of over 4 million retirees and their families.