

FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

815 16th Street, NW, Fourth Floor • Washington, DC 20006 • 202.637.5399

www.retiredamericans.org • aracommunications@retiredamericans.org

February 22, 2013

Alliance Lobby Week Comes Just Days Before Sequester Cuts are Set to Kick In

Alliance members scheduled more than 70 district meetings with their elected officials for this week's President's Day Lobby Week. The appointments came as the Senate is set to vote next week - right after the Congressional recess ends - on a plan to stop the March 1 sequester (automatic budget cuts) without harming Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. On February 14, Senate Democrats released their plan to avert the sequester for the rest of the year — it contains \$110 billion in deficit reduction, evenly divided between spending cuts and new revenues. During Lobby Week, Alliance members have been asking senators to vote for this package and asking House members to vote for it should it come to the House.

Included in the Lobby Week events: a rally and petition drop outside House Speaker **John Boehner's** (R) office in West Chester, Ohio on Wednesday (coverage: <http://tinyurl.com/bbwlkee>). For a map of where all the meetings have been taking place, go to <http://tinyurl.com/adyekv2>.

Among those at risk if the cuts come to fruition: homebound and disabled seniors behind closed doors — “the hidden hungry” across the U.S.A., according to **Larry Tomayko**, interim chief executive officer of the Meals On Wheels Association of America (MOWAA). If congressional domestic-spending cuts take effect on March 1, MOWAA faces an estimated 5.1% reduction in Older Americans Act funding.

According to Americans for Tax Fairness, a recent Hart Research poll found that two-thirds of voters nationwide want the richest 2% (by 66% of voters) and large corporations (by 64% of voters) to pay more in taxes. The poll also found that 59% of voters say that we still need to do more to make sure the wealthy pay their fair share of taxes: <http://tinyurl.com/a2bydwm>.

House Democrats Reaffirm Commitment to Vital Seniors' Programs

One hundred and seven Democratic members of the U.S. House of Representatives, led by **Rep. Jan Schakowsky** (D-IL), released a letter last Friday in which they implored President **Obama** not to agree to any cuts to Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid as part of an upcoming deal over the sequester cuts. In the letter, the Representatives adamantly state that they will not agree to a “compromise” that includes cuts to earned benefit programs, including implementation of the flawed “Chained CPI” method of calculating Social Security cost of living adjustments. To read the letter and see if your Member of Congress signed it, go to <http://tinyurl.com/bxysruq>.

“It is very encouraging to see a majority of the House Democratic Caucus sign onto this strong statement supporting seniors,” said **Edward F. Coyle**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “We urge President Obama to follow their lead and make it clear to Republicans that cutting Social Security and Medicare benefits, including implementation of the Chained CPI, is not an option.”

New Bowles-Simpson Outline: Particularly Bad for Seniors

The former heads of the President's National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform — **Erskine Bowles** and **Alan Simpson** — unveiled a new debt reduction plan Tuesday that they said is intended to pressure the White House and Congress to stop squabbling and act. Among other cuts, their plan slashes \$600 billion from Medicare and Medicaid, in part by reducing provider payments under Medicare, and demanding that more money come from Medicare beneficiaries' pockets. Their plan would also adopt the chained CPI. Go to <http://tinyurl.com/axw9o88> to read *Politico*'s article.

“The new framework that Erskine Bowles and Alan Simpson outlined on Tuesday cuts tax rates for the wealthiest Americans and corporations - those who need it least,” said **Barbara J. Easterling**, President of the Alliance. “Some of the ways that they ‘accomplish’ this are by cutting earned Social Security benefits, transferring health care costs to seniors, and reducing federal employees’ retirement benefits. It is a particularly bad deal for seniors.”

Voting Rights Project Releases 2012 Election Report

The Voting Rights Project, a division of the Lawyers’ Committee on Civil Rights, has just released a comprehensive report on voting problems during the 2012 elections. The report details how countless Americans, including many seniors, were either unable to vote or had to wait in line for hours due to voter registration problems, understaffed polling places, malfunctioning voting machines, unjust voter ID laws, and many other flaws in our voting system. These voting issues are especially problematic for seniors, who are less likely to own photo IDs and are not always physically able to wait in long lines for several hours. Click on <http://tinyurl.com/ctg5dnp> to read the findings.

“This report illuminates many areas of our voting system that need to be reformed,” said **Ruben Burks**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “Instead of making it harder for seniors to vote by passing unnecessary voter ID laws, our lawmakers should work to increase voter turnout by implementing mail-in voting and increasing the number of polling places and poll workers.”

America’s Work Force Radio Show Airs in Cleveland, Can be Heard Nationally

America’s Work Force, a daily labor-radio program, has been on the air since 1993, supplying listeners with useful, relevant input into their daily lives through fact-finding features, in-depth interviews, and practical consumer reports. To hear it locally, tune in on WERE 1490 AM in Cleveland weekday afternoons from 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Click on <http://tinyurl.com/c9jcz5m> to listen to an internet stream of the show from anywhere during that hour. Or, click on <http://tinyurl.com/b4ucc5h> to hear a podcast Of America’s Work Force shows through iTunes.

At the heart of the show is its provocative guest list – through the support and participation of the labor community, dozens of labor leaders and advocates have been guests, along with politicians, civic leaders, industry professionals, experts and more. You can generally hear Mr. Coyle on the show the second Wednesday of every month. The show is now in its 20th year and **Ed “Flash” Ferenc** has been hosting it since 1998. “Today’s seniors are the folks that built America and made it great. They fought for us in wars, they worked hard so their kids could have a better life than they did. As a country, we cannot do enough for them,” said Mr. Ferenc.

This message is being sent to you as a member of the Alliance for Retired Americans. The Alliance is a nationwide membership organization organized under Internal Revenue Code 501 (c) (4) and dedicated to educating all Americans about and advocating on behalf of retirees and seniors. The Alliance is responsible for the content and has paid all costs associated with the preparation and distribution of this message.