

FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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Voting Record Rates “The Most Unproductive Congress” in Nation’s Modern History

On Monday, the Alliance released its annual report detailing the voting record of every U.S. Senator and Representative on key issues affecting current and future retirees. The document, available at <http://www.retiredamericans.org/issues/congressional-voting-record>, examined 10 key Senate votes and 10 key House votes in 2012. It contains the roll calls on issues such as: whether to privatize Medicare and create a voucher-like system in its place; whether to turn Medicaid into a block grant system; and whether to undo key Affordable Care Act provisions that benefit seniors. For the first time, the report is available in Spanish (at same link).

“This past year we saw the most unproductive Congress in modern American history finally come to an end, passing fewer than 250 bills in two years,” said **Barbara J. Easterling**, President of the Alliance. “The House even refused to vote on needed relief to victims of Hurricane Sandy. Yet, it voted repeatedly to repeal the Affordable Care Act, even after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on its constitutionality. In contrast, while attacks on core retiree programs continued, many in Congress voted to preserve a tax system that favors the wealthiest Americans. For more than a decade, the wealthiest Americans have received trillions in tax breaks while older Americans have seen rising drug, health care, food, and energy costs.” To see the full press release about the report, go to <http://tinyurl.com/plx7kov>.

In Conference Call, Sen. Harkin Explains Plan to Give Seniors an Extra \$800 per Year

A bill introduced in the U.S. Senate by Sen. **Tom Harkin** (D-IA), Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, called “The Strengthening Social Security Act of 2013,” (S.567) would put as much as an extra \$800 in your pocket every year. Sen. Harkin addressed over 4,000 Alliance members and activists in a Telephone Town Hall on Monday, when they heard him explain his bill. The bill also increases the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) to better reflect the cost of goods and services typically used by older Americans; strengthens the Social Security Trust Fund; and ensures the program is solvent for decades to come. If you have not already done so, sign our Strengthening Social Security Act Petition right now at <http://tinyurl.com/ohhdzy6>.

Add Your Ideas for the AFL-CIO Convention!

The AFL-CIO will hold its quadrennial convention September 8-11 in Los Angeles this year. Help shape the agenda! Propose a session or host a discussion at <http://tinyurl.com/nbhnxb>.

Join Us in Creating Human Chains against Chained CPI on July 2

On Tuesday July 2nd, the Alliance will sponsor a National Day of Action in which we focus specifically on elevating grassroots voices in the battle to protect and enhance retirement security. We will work together to create a human chain in front of Congressional offices, key Federal buildings, and other strategic locations in states around the country. It will be a Human Chain against the Chained CPI! The National Alliance will host a media event in DC with a smaller chain

to create powerful symbolism of what the States are doing, spotlighting the national day of action. More information about the day is available at <http://tinyurl.com/pd8pbsz>.

“On the National Day of Action, Alliance members around the country will send Congress a full throated message,” said **Edward F. Coyle**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “We refuse to be chained by the Chained CPI.”

Projected Spending Numbers for Medicare and Medicaid Reduced by \$900 Billion

According to new figures released by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO's), projections of cumulative Medicare and Medicaid spending over the decade from 2010-2020 have been sharply reduced. Since late 2010, the CBO's estimation of Medicare costs has fallen by \$590 billion and its estimation of Medicaid cuts by \$311 billion. This is not a result of any cuts to the programs, but is instead part of a larger trend of reduced health care costs over the last few years. To read a report from the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities explaining more, go to <http://tinyurl.com/ojym5eb>.

“The decrease in projected spending shows that these programs are strong and healthy and will remain so for the foreseeable future as long as they are protected from the misguided ‘reforms’ like raising the eligibility age for Medicare and shifting more costs to beneficiaries,” said **Ruben Burks**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “This is clear evidence that any cuts or major changes to Medicare or Medicaid in the guise of ‘protecting’ the programs are entirely unnecessary.”

President Easterling is among those Arrested at United Mine Workers Protest

Thousands of United Mine Workers rallied outside Peabody Energy in St. Louis on Tuesday, furious that the coal company loaded much of its union contract obligations onto a spinoff company - Patriot Coal - that was designed to fail. Patriot's plan will cut health care and retirement benefits, and about a dozen protesters were peacefully arrested for sitting in the street. Among them: Alliance President Easterling. A U.S. Bankruptcy Court is scheduled to issue a ruling on the Patriot Coal case sometime before May 29, unless all parties agree to seek an extension. To see a photo of Ms. Easterling at the protest, go to <http://tinyurl.com/p2nt5nl>. “What Peabody Coal is doing is absolutely criminal. They are using our nation’s bankruptcy laws as a license to steal. They are stealing from the sick and the elderly. They are stealing from widows,” said Ms. Easterling at the rally.

New York State Alliance Holds its Convention

New York’s annual state Alliance convention took place in Albany on Thursday, drawing over 60 delegates. Speakers included **Dani Pere**, Director of Field Mobilization for the national Alliance; **Eric Kingson**, so-director of Social Security Works, and several others, including representatives from the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) and the AFL-CIO. Discussions focused on topics including chained CPI; planning for the July 2nd National Day of Action; and a report on state pensions. Elected to office were: **Dennis Tracey**, State President; **Doris Welch**, Secretary; **Dorothy Breen**, Treasurer; **Paul Schuh**, Labor VP; and **Molly Krakowski**, Community VP.

Coalition of Black Trade Unionists Hear from Coyle, Richard Fiesta

Mr. Coyle and **Richard Fiesta**, Director of the national Alliance’s Department of Government and Political Affairs, addressed an energized crowd of over 100 Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) members in Orlando on Tuesday and Wednesday this week.