



## October 28, 2013 E-Newsletter

### **Tell Sen. Durbin: Don't sell us out on Social Security and Medicare**



This past weekend, Sen. Dick Durbin, the second most powerful Democrat in the Senate, appeared on Fox News Sunday and told host Chris Wallace that he would support cuts to Social Security and Medicare benefits as part of a grand bargain with Republicans.

These vital and hugely successful programs deserve to be strengthened and expanded, not cut. But the Republicans are longstanding opponents of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, and have been waging an unrelenting, decades-long assault to destroy, defund or privatize these programs.

The last thing we need is a powerful Democrat, especially one like Sen. Durbin who claims to care about these programs, going on national television and saying he's open to making a deal with the Republicans that includes benefit cuts.

**[Tell Sen. Durbin: Don't sell us out. Click here to automatically sign the petition.](#)**

After standing unified in the shutdown and debt ceiling fight, the Democrats are in a great negotiating position with Paul Ryan and the House Republicans. It is mindboggling that they would move from a position of strength to a position of weakness so quickly.

We need to send a message to Sen. Durbin that this kind of behavior is unacceptable.

But when we put pressure on Sen. Durbin, it also sends a message to other Senate Democrats and to President Obama, who has been close with Sen. Durbin since they served together in the Senate.

Cutting Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security benefits is deeply unpopular across the political spectrum.

Sen. Durbin is a powerful leader within the Senate and within the Democratic Party. We can't let him think it's acceptable to offer up benefit cuts, regardless of whether the offer is earnest or part of some stratagem.

These programs are too important to be used as bargaining chips. And we need to speak out to make sure he knows that we won't sit down and stay quiet while he -- or any other Democrat -- does so.

Tell Sen. Durbin: Don't sell us out.

### **Paul Ryan wants narrower focus for new budget talks**

*By David Lawder  
Full story at Reuters*

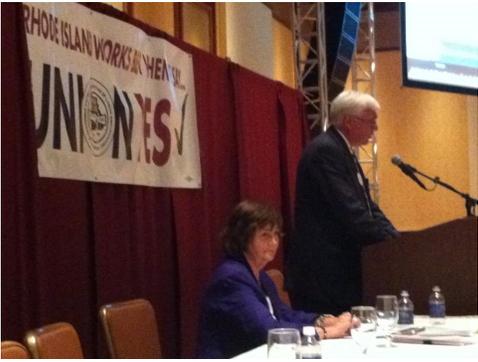
**A new round of U.S. budget negotiations starting next week should focus more narrowly on replacing automatic spending cuts rather than an elusive "grand bargain," House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan said on Thursday.**

Ryan told Reuters in an interview that simply maintaining the automatic "sequester" cuts was the fallback position for Republicans if Democrats do not agree to substitute longer-term savings on expensive federal benefits programs. "We have spending cuts coming. The question is, can we get something that's better than this?" said Ryan, last year's Republican vice presidential nominee. "If we can get an agreement, it's obviously going to be better than the status quo."



Ryan, who will lead Republicans on the panel, said there was a better chance of finding common ground with Democrats on "smarter" spending cuts to replace the across-the-board reductions to discretionary spending. He said those include reforms to "entitlements," which include the Medicare and Social Security programs for the elderly, Medicaid healthcare for the poor and some farm subsidy programs...**[Read More](#)**

## Rhode Island AFL-CIO: George Nee and Maureen Martin Re-elected to Lead Rhode Island AFL-CIO



Nearly 400 delegates, representing the 80,000 working men and women of the Rhode Island AFL-CIO, voted to re-elect George Nee and Maureen Martin to lead the Rhode Island AFL-CIO for the next four years at the labor federation's convention held Friday, October 18th at Twin River Casino.

The delegates gathered to vote on leadership, to set the agenda of the Rhode Island AFL-CIO for the coming year, and hear from a number of speakers on the state of the labor movement both nationally and locally.

Resolutions were adopted on a number of issues impacting all aspects of the Rhode Island labor movement. Increasing the minimum wage to \$8.50 an hour, employee misclassification, school and offshore wind energy construction, supporting keeping Victory Day as a Rhode Island state holiday, and proposing

that TF Green State Airport be renamed Worker's Memorial Airport, in honor of striking mill workers killed by the National Guard during the Strike of 1934 were some of the 20 resolutions adopted by the convention goers.

Steve Tolman, President of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, spoke to the convention delegates on shared prosperity and the need for working men and women to stand together and support one another against those who would like to take away their rights. Rhode Island union leaders addressed the convention and offered their views on the issues and challenges facing labor in Rhode Island. The speakers were Pat Quinn from SEIU representing healthcare workers, Michael Sabitoni president of the Rhode Island Building and Construction Trades, Frank Flynn from the RIFTHP, and J. Michael Downey from Council 94 AFSCME.

In recognition of their organizing efforts to grow the labor movement in Rhode Island over the last several years the National Education Association Rhode Island, UFCW Local 328, IATSE Local 23, Laborers Local 271, AFSCME-Council 94, ATU Local 618, UAW Local 212, AFGE, and SEIU District 1199 New England were given Organizing Awards.

**Note: Resolution No. 17, *Elimination of the Unfair GPO and WEP Provisions of the Social Security Act that was introduced by the Rhode Island Alliance for Retired Americans. Adopted. Thank You RI AFL-CIO Members.***

### Troubling Trade Deal on the Horizon

The Obama administration is now gearing up to enlist support for its effort to pass the newest free trade treaty, The Trans-Pacific Partnership, through Congress by the end of this year.

Have you heard of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Free Trade Agreement? If not, you're not alone – the American people, by design, know very little about what U.S. negotiators are promising in closed-door talks with Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam and other countries. 600 corporate advisors have access to the text, but the rest of us do not.

President Obama has called for the rarely used “fast-track” authority that would give him the right to sign the TPP agreement before Congress votes on it. And when Congress does vote, it will be under restrictive rules limiting debate and prohibiting all amendments.

“What has come to light is that in addition to corporate-favored terms that would send American jobs offshore and decrease environmental and health safeguards, the TPP could undermine the ability of states or the federal government to moderate escalating prescription drug, biologic drug and medical device costs in public programs,” said **Ruben Burks**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “That includes limiting the government’s ability to negotiate lower prices for prescription drugs through Medicaid and the Veterans Administration.”

The Alliance is joining with labor, public interest groups and others in urging Congress and the President to make the process of these negotiations transparent, allow public input, and ensure that the TPP agreement and future trade agreements do not limit the tools of states or the federal government to manage pharmaceutical and medical device costs in public programs or bind the U.S. to a 12-year exclusivity period for brand-name biologic drugs...[Read More](#)



## New National Company to Advise Boomers on When to Take Social Security Benefit

**More than 90% of SSA recipients do not maximize benefits because they are unaware of their options; army of advisors to help 72 Million baby boomers**



When should I start receiving my Social Security benefit? It is a question asked often and answered very often by financial columnists and spokespersons for the Social Security Administration. Now, a Cincinnati based company is building a business on it. Premier Social Security Consulting, is gathering an "army of advisors" nationwide to educate baby boomers on the most optimal time to access Social Security benefits.

More than 150 certified public accountants, insurance agents, financial advisors, enrolled agents and other professional advisors from California to New Jersey, Michigan to Florida have become National Social Security Advisors (NSSA).

Counseling baby boomers on optimizing Social Security benefits has become a hot topic. There are 72 million Baby Boomers nationwide, and about 10,000 Boomers turn 65 each day....[Read More](#)

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## Flu Vaccine Seems to Offer Seniors Protection from Heart Failure, Heart Attack

**Researchers encourage confirmation of this low-cost, annual, safe, easily administered, and well-tolerated therapy to reduce cardiovascular risk up to 50%**

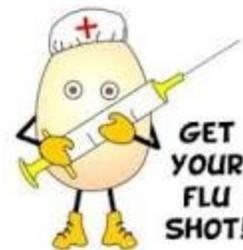
For senior citizens needing a push to motivate them to get their annual flu shot, a new study showing the influenza vaccination appears to offer as much as 50 percent protection from major adverse cardiovascular events, such as heart failure, stroke or hospitalization from heart attack. And, those who seemed to receive the most benefit were those with recent acute coronary syndrome (ACS), such as heart attack of unstable angina.

"Hundreds of thousands of people die each year from cardiac causes in North America," said Jacob A. Udell, M.D., M.P.H., F.R.C.P.C., of the University of Toronto.

"While preventative care involves lifestyle changes and taking your pills, now, we may also be able to tell patients by getting your flu shot, it might save your life – what a simple and significant way to reduce deaths and the burden on our healthcare system."

Several earlier epidemiological studies suggested a strong relationship between influenza vaccination and a lower risk of fatal and nonfatal cardiovascular events.

"Among nontraditional cardiovascular risk factors, there remains interest in a potential association between respiratory tract infections, of which influenza and influenza-like illnesses are common causes, and subsequent cardiovascular events," according to the authors in explaining their research in the October 23 issue of *JAMA*....[Read More](#)



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## Older Adults Using the Internet are More Likely to Engage in Cancer Prevention Behavior

**One exception: no association between internet use and participation in breast cancer screening**



A new study finds that men and women who use the internet – that is you – are more likely to participate in screening for colorectal cancer, participate in physical activities, eat healthily, and smoke less, compared with those who do not use the internet.

The study published in *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention*, a journal of the American Association for Cancer Research, collected data from men and women aged 50 or older, and found that men and women who were consistent internet users were twice as likely to participate in colorectal screening as nonusers.

Both men and women who used the internet consistently were also 50 percent more likely to take part in regular physical activity, 24 percent more likely to eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables daily, and 44 percent less likely to be current smokers....[Read More](#)

## **Drug that May Suggest You Don't Have Alzheimer's Okayed by FDA for Use with PET Scan**

**Vizamyl helps determine how much beta amyloid, if any, in your brain and provide some idea if it is Alzheimer's or other dementia**



The U.S. Food and Drug Administration today approved Vizamyl (flutemetamol F 18 injection), a radioactive diagnostic drug for use with positron emission tomography (PET) imaging of the brain in adults being evaluated for Alzheimer's disease (AD) and dementia. The drug, for use only by professionals, helps determine if the amount of beta amyloid in the patient's brain suggests Alzheimer's disease or some other dementia.

Dementia is associated with diminishing brain functions such as memory, judgment, language and complex motor skills. The dementia caused by AD is associated with the accumulation in the brain of an abnormal protein called beta amyloid and damage or death of brain cells. However, beta amyloid can

also be found in the brain of patients with other dementias and in elderly people without neurologic disease.

Vizamyl works by attaching to beta amyloid and producing a PET image of the brain that is used to evaluate the presence of beta amyloid. A negative Vizamyl scan means that there is little or no beta amyloid accumulation in the brain and the cause of the dementia is probably not due to AD.

A positive scan means that there is probably a moderate or greater amount of amyloid in the brain, but it does not establish a diagnosis of AD or other dementia. Vizamyl does not replace other diagnostic tests used in the evaluation of AD and dementia.

“Many Americans are evaluated every year to determine the cause of diminishing neurologic functions, such as memory and judgment, that raise the possibility of Alzheimer’s disease,” said Shaw Chen, M.D., deputy director of the Office of Drug Evaluation IV in the FDA’s Center for Drug Evaluation and Research.

“Imaging drugs like Vizamyl provide physicians with important tools to help evaluate patients for AD and dementia.” ...[Read More](#)

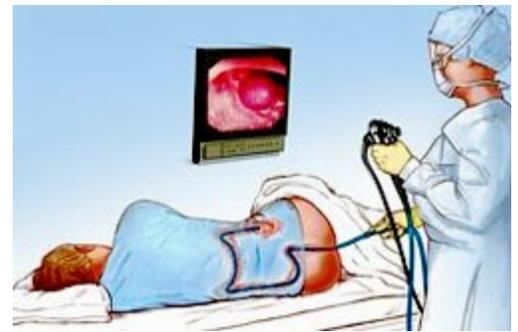
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## **Colonoscopy the Only Way for Seniors – Sigmoidoscopy Cannot Find All the Polyps**

**Most older people dread the colonoscopy search for possible colon cancer, second leading cause of cancer death in the U.S.**

Senior citizens are almost universal in their dread of the colonoscopy, which keeps many of them searching for an easier way to guard against colon cancer. These dreams took a hit today from research showing people over age 60 are more likely to have precancerous or cancerous polyps develop in a part of the colon that goes unseen by flexible sigmoidoscopy, a common screening test for colon and rectal cancer. And the problem grows with advanced age.

This discovery suggests the need for reviewing and possibly revising national colon cancer screening guidelines, study authors said at the 2013 Clinical Congress of the American College of Surgeons...[Read More](#)



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## **Lung, Prostate and Other Cancers Diagnosed by Simple Blood Test, Researchers Say**

**'we identified compounds that appear to be new screening biomarkers in cancer diagnosis and prognosis'**

Early-stage lung and prostate cancers as well as their recurrence can be detected with a simple blood test, according to a study presented at the Anesthesiology 2013 annual meeting. Serum-free fatty acids and their metabolites may be used as screening biomarkers to help diagnose early stages of cancer, as well as identify the probability of recovery and recurrence after tumor removal, researchers found....[Read More](#)

