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# RI ARA

*“Fighting for the future of our members.  
NOW, more than ever!!!!”*

*Affiliated with the Rhode Island AFL-CIO  
HealthLink Wellness*

**April 21, 2014, 2014 E-Newsletter**



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RI ARA

## **AFL-CIO Cites CEO Pay to Press for Raising Minimum Wage**



Annual figures compiled by the AFL-CIO show chief executives of big U.S. companies made many times more than average workers last year, a gap union leaders will use to challenge wages and pressure Congress to boost the federal minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour.

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka released his organization’s annual Executive Paywatch report on Tuesday, this time using the searchable database to take aim at giant companies he says pay low wages.

“CEOs make a ridiculous amount of money” and that “has left very little for the rest of us,” Mr. Trumka said at a press conference in Washington. “That disparity represents the basic problem of the economy,” he said, and touted union-organizing as one way to help.

According to the database, the CEOs of S&P 500 companies received an average \$11.7 million in 2013, compared with the average worker’s earnings of \$35,293. While the labor federation said the comparison isn’t apples-to-apples, it said the average CEO makes 331 times as much as the average worker, and 774 times more than those making minimum wage.

The CEO-to-worker comparison isn’t exact. The AFL-CIO’s measure of CEO compensation includes stock options, equity awards and some perks, while the measure for workers just includes pay, excluding pensions or employer contributions to 401(k) plans. AFL-CIO officials said that’s because there’s an absence of company-specific data showing what individual employers pay their employees, so it uses information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics that is based only on workers’ salaries.

Mr. Trumka said the report’s release was timed for tax day because it’s “a day of shared sacrifice.” He cited Wal-Mart Stores Inc. WMT +0.57% as the top example of a company that needs to sacrifice more to boost worker pay. Wal-Mart CEO Michael Duke received \$20 million in total compensation in fiscal 2013, the AFL-CIO database shows, which means a minimum-wage Wal-Mart worker would have to work nearly 1,400 hours to earn what Mr. Duke made in just one hour, the labor organization said...**READ MORE**



**Yahoo fired its CEO after 13 months and paid him a severance pay of \$58 million dollars.**

## **U.S. Halts Effort to Collect Old Social Security Debts**

*By ANNIE LOWREY, New York Times*

The Social Security Administration said Monday that it would stop trying to collect taxpayers’ debts that were more than 10 years old.

The statement came after a Washington Post article revealed that the Treasury had started intercepting the federal and state tax refunds of debtors’ children — even if the debts were decades old. The debts stem from overpayments by Social Security that the agency had been trying to recoup even if the original recipients had died.

“I have directed an immediate halt to further referrals under the Treasury Offset Program to recover debts owed to the agency that are 10 years old and older,” Carolyn W. Colvin, the acting commissioner of Social Security, said in a statement.

Ms. Colvin said the effort would stop until the agency completed a thorough review of its “responsibility and discretion” to collect any debts to the government.

A revision to the Farm Bill passed in 2008 lifted the statute of limitations “applicable to collection of debt by administrative offset.” That allowed the authorities to withhold the tax refunds of 400,000 people who had relatives with debts to Social Security, The Post reported...**Read More**



## AFL-CIO April Executive Board Meeting at Twin River Casino

### This was the RI ARA Report By John A. Pernorio, President

One again the elderly & retired are under attack by Rep. Paul Ryan and the Republican FY 2015 Budget that was passed last week.

Rep. Ryan just doesn't get it, last year it was the Chained CPI that would have been a disaster for senior citizens. Through hard work on the Alliance for Retired Americans National "Some Cuts Never Heal" day event held at the Salvatore Mancini Recourse & Activity Center against the Chained CPI and with the help of Senators Reed & Whitehouse, Congressmen Langevin & Cicilline, we defeated that.

This year Rep. Ryan continues to include tax breaks to the people & corporations that don't need them while applying more cost to the people that can least afford them. He still wants to create a voucher system for Medicare and turn it over to the insurance companies at the same time generating higher age eligibility for Medicare.

Make no mistake, the senior citizens and retirees of this country are in a battle to protect and preserve their future and the future of impending retirees.

The ARA and its affiliated chapters are in this fight to the end. With the help of Senators Reed & Whitehouse, Congressmen Langevin & Cicilline, we will not stand by and let this happen without a fight.

**For the active local unions in RI, please note that this fight is not only our fight as retiree advocates, but your fight too. This is a battle for your future retirees and their ability to live a respectable retirement.**

Again, thank you Senator Reed, Congressmen Langevin & Cicilline for your support of the RI elderly & retired.

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## Fake IRS collectors are calling

This time of year is often *taxing* for many consumers. Scams aimed at stealing taxpayers' money make the season more stressful.

The Treasury Inspector General for Taxpayer Administration (TIGTA) warns that crooks posing as Internal Revenue Service (IRS) officials are contacting people claiming they owe taxes. The caller demands a prepaid debit card, wire transfer or a credit card number for payment. If the person doesn't comply, the caller threatens to arrest or deport the target, or take away their driver's license or business.

Thousands of victims have lost money to these tax scam artists. But there are ways to recognize them and foil their attempts to steal your money.

## FTC shuts down multi-million dollar phone scam

What do you say to a group of thieves that steal more than \$20 million from tens of thousands of older consumers? The FTC says, "Gotcha!"

The FTC filed a lawsuit in federal court to stop a multi-million dollar cross-border telemarketing operation led by Ari Tietolman. The FTC alleged that phone scammers in the U.S. and Canada pitched bogus fraud protection, legal protection, and pharmaceutical benefit services in a ruse to steal money from unsuspecting seniors. According to the FTC's complaint, the scammers used scare tactics and outright lies to get consumers' bank account information. Sometimes the scammers impersonated bankers or government officials and told consumers their accounts were at risk. The FTC alleges that, once the scammers had the bank information, they withdrew money from the victims' accounts without their knowledge.

A federal judge granted the FTC's request to halt the scam and freeze the defendants' assets pending the outcome of the FTC's lawsuit.

Telemarketing scammers are good at what they do, but you can take action to counter them and help others from becoming a victim:

**Recognize the signs of telemarketing fraud**, like callers who ask for money first or who want to know your bank account, credit card or Social Security number. Share the warning signs with family, friends, and co-workers.

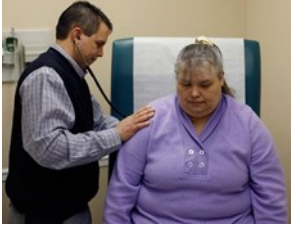
**Report the calls to the FTC.** Complaints matter at the FTC; they help drive agency investigations and cases just like the one against First Consumers.

**Sign up for the National Do Not Call Registry.** You can register online or call toll-free 1-888-382-1222 from the number you wish to register. You'll get fewer telemarketing calls within 31 days of registering your number...**Read More**

# HealthLink Wellness

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## Diabetics beware. Your insurance company is looking for you.



As hundreds of thousands of diabetics get health coverage under the federal law, insurance companies are aggressively targeting this glut of new patients, who are expensive to treat and often lax in taking medications and following their diet.

Insurers are calling diabetics when they don't pick up prescriptions or miss appointments. They are arranging transportation to get them to the doctor's office and some are even sending nurses on house calls in an effort to avoid costly complications that will have big impact on their bottom lines.

Before the Affordable Care Act, some diabetics struggled to find insurance because of their pre-existing condition. But the new law no longer allows companies to refuse them or charge more, making early intervention even more critical.

About 60 percent or so people with Type 2 diabetes can keep side effects at bay by simply managing sugar levels, exercising and watching their weight, said Dr. Sam Nussbaum, a former endocrinologist at Harvard's Massachusetts General Hospital and an executive vice president for the insurer WellPoint.

On the flip side, if the disease is ignored, it can lead to multiple, severe complications. It's the leading cause of heart disease, strokes, kidney failure and vision loss.

A relatively healthy person with diabetes can cost insurers around \$5,000 a year.

"But if you let any of those long-term, difficult complications develop, then you're talking \$100,000 dollars plus," Nussbaum said...[Read More](#)

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## Is Link Between Cognitive Decline and Vitamin D Deficiency in Seniors a Clue to Treatment?

**Controlled trials are needed to determine whether vitamin D supplementation can prevent cognitive decline**

Vitamin D deficiency and cognitive impairment are common in senior citizens, but there isn't a lot of conclusive research into whether there's a relationship between the two. A new study out today, however, has found evidence of an association between low vitamin D levels and cognitive decline in seniors. The lead author is calling for clinical trials to see if vitamin D can prevent cognitive decline.



The new study from Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center published online ahead of print this month in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* enhances the existing literature on the subject.

"This study provides increasing evidence that suggests there is an association between low vitamin D levels and cognitive decline over time," said lead author Valerie Wilson, M.D., assistant professor of geriatrics at Wake Forest Baptist.

"Although this study cannot establish a direct cause and effect relationship, it would have a huge public health implication if vitamin D supplementation could be shown to improve cognitive performance over time because deficiency is so common in the population."

Wilson and colleagues were interested in the association between vitamin D levels and cognitive function over time in older adults. They used data from the Health, Aging and Body composition (Health ABC) study to look at the relationship.

The researchers looked at 2,777 well-functioning seniors aged 70 to 79 whose cognitive function was measured at the study's onset and again four years later. Vitamin D levels were measured at the 12-month follow-up visit.

The Health ABC study cohort consists of 3,075 Medicare-eligible, white and black, well-functioning, community-dwelling older adults who were recruited between April 1997 and June 1998 from Pittsburgh, Pa., and Memphis, Tenn.

"Doctors need this information to make well-supported recommendations to their patients," Wilson said.

"Further research is also needed to evaluate whether specific cognitive domains, such as memory versus concentration, are especially sensitive to low vitamin D levels."...[Read More](#)



## Spouses Take on More Demanding Jobs as Caregiver Than Others, Finds New Report

Tackle tough medical, nursing tasks; less likely to get support from family, friends, health care professionals



Spouses who are caregivers not only perform many of the tasks that health care professionals do - a range of medical/nursing tasks including medication management, wound care, using meters and monitors, and more - but they are significantly more likely to do so than other family caregivers, who are mostly adult children.

Nearly two-thirds of spouses who are family caregivers performed such tasks (65 percent), compared to 42 percent of nonspousal caregivers, according to the report from the United Hospital Fund and AARP Public Policy Institute.

Despite these demanding responsibilities, spouses were less likely than nonspousal caregivers to receive in-home support from health care professionals; 84 percent of spousal care recipients received no professional health care on site, compared to 65 percent of nonspousal care recipients.

Compounding the challenge, spouses were also less likely to receive help from family or friends or home care aides: 58 percent of the spouses reported no additional help from others, compared to 20 percent of nonspouses..[Read More](#)

## Senior Women with Diabetes Less Likely to Have Mammogram Despite Higher Risk

Researchers find low socioeconomic status an additional obstacle to preventive care in already disadvantaged population

Older women with diabetes are much likely to develop breast cancer and less likely to survive the cancer, yet, researchers find these diabetic women are 14 percent less likely to be screened for breast cancer compared to women without diabetes.

The study by researchers at the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences (ICES) and Women's College Hospital, Toronto, is the first to examine the influence of socioeconomic status on the gap in mammogram screening among women with diabetes.

"Managing the demands of a chronic condition such as diabetes is challenging for many women, leaving other preventative actions, like screening for cancer, to fall by the wayside," said Dr. Lorraine Lipscombe, a staff physician at Women's College Hospital and an adjunct scientist at ICES.

"Our study found having diabetes posed a significant barrier to breast cancer screening even after considering a woman's socioeconomic status, a known contributor to disparities in care among women"...[Read More](#)



## Spanish Friday Alert now Available

The *Friday Alert* will now be available each week in Spanish! To see last week's *Alerta Semanal*, go to <http://tinyurl.com/mq7gpry>. For the Alliance's Spanish language page, which includes fact sheets and other translated documents from the main site, go to <http://tinyurl.com/nllcz6n>. More outreach from the Alliance to the Hispanic elder community will be coming in the next few months.

The New England ARA state affiliates are actively pursuing these Petitions.

**House Concurrent Resolution 67 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 26 to get power doors installed in Post Offices and other federal buildings.**

**Get The Message Out:**

**SIGN THE PETITION!!!!**

**Elimination of the Unfair GPO and WEP Provisions of the Social Security Act to make sure the Congress of the United States enacts legislation, HR 3118 & S 896**

**Get The Message Out:**

**SIGN THE PETITION!!!!**

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