



August 12, 2013 E-Newsletter

HAPPY 78th BIRTHDAY SOCIAL SECURITY, THANK YOU FDR

On Wednesday, August 14, 2013, Social Security celebrates its 78th birthday. Before Social Security, seniors worked until the day they died because they could never afford to retire. This week, retirees across the country celebrate the program that they contribute to in their working years and can rely on for modest benefits when they need it most. The program is more important than ever with the decline of defined-benefit pensions, plummeting 401ks and scanty savings.

We are upset when we hear politicians or TV commentators talk about how we should cut Social Security benefits. Politicians have talked for a long time about turning Social Security over to Wall Street, cutting benefits, using the Chained CPI to calculate Cost of

Living increases and raising the retirement age. Easy for them to say – maybe they have trust funds that the rest of us don't.

As retirees, it bothers us when people think that Social Security is a hand-out or a give-away. The truth is we paid for it every day we worked. We know how important Social Security is to our community. Social Security helps seniors, persons with disabilities, widows, and children who have lost a parent. For many of these people, I just don't know how they would survive without Social Security.

Working men and women paid for their Social Security through taxes that came out of every pay check of their lives, so it has nothing to do with our budget deficit. Our government must honor its

commitment to workers, and if we want to lower the deficit, let's instead take away all those tax breaks for millionaires and big corporations.

What are our children and grandchildren going to do? They are having a hard time of it now, so what will it be like for them when they retire? They'll definitely need Social Security, so let's make sure the politicians don't take it away.

Social Security is a smart, responsible way to prepare for your retirement. A small amount of money comes out of each paycheck, week after week, year after year. Then, when you retire, that money is there for you.

Not only does this make perfect sense, but it's also something we have earned and deserve. I know we need to lower the budget

deficit, but I think we should start with unnecessary corporate tax breaks people don't need, and not the Social Security that we have worked hard for all our lives.

Some politicians have promoted the ideas of turning Social Security over to Wall Street through privatization, cutting benefits and raising the retirement age to 70. There are better ways to strengthen the Social Security Trust Fund that don't compromise this important lifeline. And there are *definitely* better ways to lower our national deficit, which Social Security did not contribute to.

[Read the RI Report from SS Works](#)



“We can never insure one-hundred percent of the population against one-hundred percent of the hazards and vicissitudes of life. But we have tried to frame a law which will give some measure of protection to the average citizen and to his family against the loss of a job and against poverty-ridden old age. This law, too, represents a cornerstone in a structure which is being built but is by no means complete. It is a structure intended to lessen the force of possible future depressions. It will act as a protection to future Administrations against the necessity of going deeply into debt to furnish relief to the needy. The law will flatten out the peaks and valleys of deflation and of inflation. It is, in short, a law that will take care of human needs and at the same time provide for the United States an economic structure of vastly greater soundness.”

—*Franklin D. Roosevelt, August 14, 1935*

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



SOCIAL SECURITY



On August 16, 2013 at 12 Noon
The Rhode Island Alliance *for* Retired Americans
will celebrate

The 78th Birthday of Social Security
by serving a Birthday Cake with
Senator Sheldon Whitehouse
at The East Providence Senior Center
610 Waterman Ave.
East Providence, RI

38 Studios fallout must not paralyze us

LAURIE WHITE/MICHAEL SABITONI

Debate over the 38 Studios bond payments dominated this year's General Assembly session. Rightly so — the decision was an important one for state lawmakers, with larger implications for Rhode Island's economy. But we're left with a fear that unease over the 38 Studios fallout could further damage the state's struggling economy if we allow our caution to turn to apathy, our fear to paralysis.

We must realize that not every new or ambitious economic development proposal bears the hallmark of "another 38 Studios." We shouldn't tie our business climate — recently ranked 49th in the country by CNBC — just to 38 Studios but rather to the larger issue of failed economic strategies. Moreover, we shouldn't let one experience affect how we view opportunities to build new industries here or capitalize on outside investments.

Both the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce and the Rhode Island Building and Construction Trades Council are dismayed, for example, by the recent unfair comparisons between 38 Studios' failed venture and the promising Deepwater Wind offshore wind projects.

Critics (including Michael R. Beauregard, "Deepwater deal smacks of 38 Studios," Commentary, July 2) are either inexcusably uninformed, given the amount of public information available on the Block Island Wind Farm, or they are purposely misleading the public in a desperate eleventh-hour attempt to sway opinion on a project that has consistently drawn widespread and diverse support from the general public, the Chamber and labor leaders as well as major local and national environmental groups.

Let's remind those critics about the facts:

Deepwater Wind was the winner of a competitive RFP (request for proposal), besting eight other prospective developers, on the merits, to become the state's preferred developer for offshore wind in 2008.

Deepwater Wind's projects are backed entirely by private dollars. The company and its private backers have invested more than \$30 million — and counting — in the Block Island Wind Farm project alone, and its leaders have been active members of the Block Island and Rhode Island business community since moving their headquarters to Providence in 2010.

More than 50 offshore wind farms are in operation in northern Europe, producing clean energy and jobs for 35,000 people. Rhode Island is poised to install the first offshore wind farm in the country.

Deepwater Wind is on record in saying that it plans, when all is said and done, to invest a quarter of a billion dollars in Rhode Island — one of the largest-ever private investments in the state. We know that the Block Island Wind Farm will produce roughly 200 construction jobs, including electricians, welders, barge operators, divers and more. These are real jobs, for real workers.

Why would we deter this company and its private investors from spending dollars here in our state, from employing our laborers so eager for work? Rhode Island is perfectly positioned to take advantage of this new industry, becoming a hub of green technology and manufacturing as more offshore wind farms are built in the Northeast.

We're all troubled by what seems like a constant stream of negative headlines about Rhode Island's business climate. We challenge anyone with an interest in bolstering the state's economy to view these rankings as a rallying cry.

The Block Island Wind Farm is just one of the many exciting projects on tap. Plans to bring a nursing school to the former South Street Station and the exciting efforts already under way by Betaspring and the Founders League to nurture startups are two other worthy initiatives.

The fallout from 38 Studios should not cripple us so much that we allow it to unfairly taint worthy projects. Other states are waiting in the wings to capitalize on these promising opportunities if Rhode Island doesn't move forward.

Let's move smartly and boldly on the right projects, right now.

Laurie White is president of the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce.

Michael Sabitoni is president of the Rhode Island Construction and Building Trades Council.

Social Security Turns 78! Sign the Petition to Keep it Strong... "Let's Not be the Last Generation to Retire!"



The American people know that our Social Security system works. During the recent economic collapse, when home equity, 401k's and savings were devastated, Social Security was the one source of retirement security that Americans could rely on. With so much uncertainty about the future, we will rely more than ever on our Social Security benefits.

That's why now is the time to build upon the one retirement security system that we know we can count on.

Instead of cutting benefits through the chained CPI, we should ensure that Social Security's cost of living adjustments adequately reflect the living expenses of retirees. We should improve the long-term condition of the Social Security trust fund by requiring millionaires and billionaires to pay the same rate on taxes toward Social Security as the rest of us.

Sign here to support strengthening Social Security on its 78th anniversary! Let's not be the last generation to retire!

[Sign the Petition](#)

WHY SENIORS ARE TURNING AGAINST THE GOP

Erica Seifert, National Memo



There's something going on with seniors: It is now strikingly clear that they have turned sharply against the GOP. This is apparent in seniors' party affiliation and vote intention, in their views on the Republican Party and its leaders, and in their surprising positions on jobs, health care, retirement security, investment economics, and the other big issues that will likely define the 2014 midterm elections...[Read More](#)

AFL-CIO LEADER SEEKS TO EXPAND MEMBERSHIP BEYOND UNIONS

Susan Page, USA Today

Calling the labor movement in crisis, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka says he will push far-reaching changes at the federation's convention next month, including forging closer partnerships and even accepting as members such outside groups as the Sierra Club and the NAACP.

The changes, some of which will require amending the AFL-CIO's bylaws, are part of a strategy aimed at reviving the labor movement's falling clout and recasting it as a champion for American workers generally, not just for the declining ranks of dues-paying union members. [Watch the video/read the article](#)



TWO CUPS OF HOT COCOA A DAY SHARPEN SENIORS' BRAINS, STUDY SUGGESTS

Ryan Jaslow, CBS News

Researchers are reporting in the Aug. 7 issue of *Neurology* that seniors who drank two cups of hot cocoa a day for one month performed better on thinking and memory tests than those who didn't. Brain imaging also showed cocoa-drinkers had better blood flow in the brain.

The study's authors say their research reflects a growing body of evidence that blood flow in the brain impacts thinking and memory.

"As different areas of the brain need more energy to complete their tasks, they also need greater blood flow," study author Dr. Farzaneh Aghdassi Sorond, an associate neurologist at Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, said in a statement. "This relationship, called neurovascular coupling, may play an important role in diseases such as Alzheimer's."...[Read More](#)



UFCW Rejoins AFL-CIO, Ending 8-Year Absence from Labor Federation



The United Food and Commercial Workers, one of the largest private-sector unions in the country, re-affiliated with the AFL-CIO labor federation on Thursday, ending the union's eight-year absence from the group and boosting the AFL-CIO's ranks by 1.3 million workers. Earlier this week, UFCW President Joe Hansen asked the union's executive board to vote on whether or not to rejoin the federation, according to union spokeswoman Jill Cashen. The board voted unanimously in support of the move.

"We join the AFL-CIO because it is the right thing to do for UFCW members, giving them more power and influence," Hansen said in a statement Thursday. "This is not about which building in Washington D.C. we call home -- it is about fostering more opportunities for workers to have a true voice on the job." - [READ MORE](#)

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN? ODDS ARE UNCOMFORTABLY HIGH

Alan Greenblatt, NPR

It's going to be another ugly fall in Washington.

Action in both the Senate and House prior to the current congressional recess suggests that any sort of a deal is a long way away. And the two chambers will be in session together a total of only nine days before the deadline.

It's no empty threat. Many who watch the budget process closely think there's a very good chance that's exactly what's going to happen...[Read More](#)



SENIORS ARE FASTEST SOCIAL MEDIA ADOPTERS IN U.S.

Zoe Fox, Mashable



Seniors have adopted social media at the highest rate over the past two years. This year, 43% of Americans over 65 use at least one social networking site, compared with 26% in 2010 and 1% in 2008.

While seniors have adopted social media at the highest rate over the past two years, the percentage that uses social media still trails behind other age groups in the U.S. They are the only group yet to reach 50% adoption. In 2013, 89% of 18 to 29-year-olds, 78% of 30 to 49-year-olds and 60% of 50 to 64-year-olds are active on the social web...[Read More](#)

WHY SOCIAL SECURITY IS CRITICAL TO OUR FUTURE

Steve Vernon, CBS Moneywatch

With the well-publicized funding issues regarding Social Security, and the bipartisan paralysis over fiscal policy, it's easy to lose sight of one thing: The federal retirement program provides a lifeline to the senior population.

This comes across loud and clear in "[Fast Facts & Figures About Social Security](#)," which contains 43 pages of statistics on Social Security retirement and disability benefits, as well as stats on the Supplemental Security Income program. I'll summarize the key points here....[Read More](#)



SOCIAL SECURITY WITHOUT PERMANENT LEADER

John Fritze, The Baltimore Sun

Six months after former Social Security Administration commissioner Michael J. Astrue left his post, the Obama administration has yet to nominate a replacement — leaving a leadership gap as the agency wrestles with shrinking budgets and hard choices...[Read More](#)