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# RI ARA

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

*Affiliated with the Rhode Island AFL-CIO*

## August 26, 2013 E-Newsletter



Published in house by the  
RI ARA

### Coming up in Congress this September and the Fall

As retirees and Social Security Beneficiaries, we need to keep a close eye on what is going to happen in Washington. Social Security belongs to the people who have worked hard all their lives and contributed to it. Social Security is a promise that must not be broken. If you pay in, then you earn the right to benefits for yourself, your spouse and your dependent children when you retire, experience a severe disability, or die. **We need to strengthen Social Security, not cut it.**

#### **Debt Ceiling –**

Grand Bargain talks continue.

The Republican House has offered a menu of options including **Medicare vouchers, means-testing Medicare, chained CPI and raising the retirement age** as a condition for raising the Debt Ceiling.

Senate Republicans (Kelly Ayotte of New Hampshire, Saxby Chambliss and Johnny Isakson of Georgia, Bob Corker of Tennessee, Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, John Hoeven of North Dakota, and Burr of North Carolina and John McCain of Arizona) **have been meeting with the White House and is looking at the Chained CPI and Medicare means-testing are part of the discussion: ...[Read More](#)**

#### **Tax Reform –**

Senator Max Baucus, Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee will be holding hearings on reforming our tax laws. Senator Reid has called for increased revenues; however, the goal of the Republicans is to broaden the tax base and lower rates, particularly corporate rates.

#### **ACA Implementation –**

The insurance exchanges or marketplace are to be up and running by October 1.

The Tea Party and the Heritage Action are trying to defund the ACA through the Continuing Resolution. They are willing to shut down the government over it....[Read More](#)

The insurance industry (AHIP), the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the Retail Federation are spending a lot of money and pushing to repeal the insurance tax that goes into effect in 2014. We have already heard from some of our Democratic friends that they want to repeal the insurance tax for Medicare Advantage plans. We have successfully explained to them that the tax is needed to fund the ACA and repealing would be detrimental and would unravel the law.

#### **Coalition launches new attacks on ObamaCare insurance tax. By Sam Baker - 08/16/13 10:22 AM ET**

A healthcare industry coalition is launching new attacks on ObamaCare's tax on health insurance plans.

***The Affordable Coverage Project, a recently formed collection of industry groups, is focusing on state-based advocacy over the August recess and says it will step up its Washington advertising once Congress returns.***

The group is running new online ads with a countdown to the insurance tax, which takes effect on Jan. 1. The tax on insurance policies is expected to raise \$8 billion in 2014 and more than \$100 billion total over the next decade. The Affordable Coverage Project, which includes America's Health Insurance Plans, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Retail Federation, is pressing Congress to repeal the tax. The group has just recently launched its [website](#), along with the new round of online advertising.

Critics say the tax will not only hurt insurance companies, but also small businesses and state and local governments, some of whom will have to pay the tax because of the way they administer Medicaid...[Read more](#)

**Center on Budget Policy Priorities paper on why to oppose the repeal of the tax on insurers:...[Read More](#)**

*Continued next page.*

## Sequester -

Despite rumblings from a few Republicans that sequestration has been a bad thing. It is unclear what will happen in the fall. Here are a couple of articles...[Read More](#) Deeper-Cuts-Threatened-2014...[Read More](#)

Also, here is the Leadership Council of Ageing Organizations (LCAO) Issue Brief on Sequestration:...[Read More](#)

## Bills ARA are Supporting and Pushing -

Harkin Res. (opposes implementation of chained CPI) - 21 Cosponsors

Cicilline Res. (opposes implementation of chained CPI) - 122

Harkin Bill, S. 567, (phases out the payroll cap, reform benefit formula, adopts CPI-E and extends solvency of the trust fund) - 2 cosponsors

Linda Sanchez is to introduce companion to Harkin bill in the House when Congress returns in September. She is trying to get 50 cosponsors before dropping the bill. So far she has about 20.

***It's time we stood up and fought for what we were promised and for Congress to STOP trying to BALANCE the BUDGET on the backs of the people that can least afford it. We Social Security Beneficiaries do not have OFF SHORE ACCOUNTS that hide INCOME nor do we have TAX SHELTERS to protect our income.***

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## 80 HOUSE REPUBLICANS URGE BOEHNER TO BLOCK 'OBAMACARE,' EVEN IF IT SHUTS DOWN THE GOVERNMENT

*Washington Post/Associated Press*



More than a third of House Republicans urged their leader Thursday to trigger a government shutdown rather than fund the implementation of the health care overhaul they call "Obamacare."

A letter from 80 Republicans asked Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, to resist any spending bills that would accommodate the new health care law, which is nearing a critical stage of signing up millions of Americans for health coverage...[Read More](#)

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## CLOCK IS TICKING FOR RECESS, AND FOR A DEFICIT DEAL

*Jonathan Weisman, New York Times*



Budget talks between the White House and Senate Republicans have gone nowhere since Congress began its summer recess, increasing chances of a fiscal stalemate that could lead to a government shutdown in October or the threat of a government default later in the fall...[Read More](#)



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## DEBT CEILING DRAMA UNDERWAY

*Jake Sherman and John Bresnahan, Politico*



Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) and other GOP leaders think that if they are able to lump the sequester and debt ceiling into one legislative fight, they will be able to extract some changes to entitlement programs from President Barack Obama and congressional Democrats...[Read More](#)





*In Recognition of His  
Outstanding Leadership & Support  
The Rhode Island Alliance for Retired Americans  
will proudly present on August 30, 2013, at 12 noon our*

*2013 Social Security &  
Medicare Hero Award*

*to*

***Jim Langevin**  
United States Congressman,  
Second District, Rhode Island  
at the*

**Johnston Senior Center  
1291 Hartford Avenue  
Johnston, RI 02919**

## Patients may need better info when leaving hospitals

Retuers



Older patients may think they understand everything doctors tell them when they are released from the hospital, but a new U.S. study found several gaps in what they remember and areas where instructions could be clearer.

Out of nearly 400 patients discharged from a large academic medical center, 96 percent reported knowing why they had been hospitalized, but only about 60 percent could accurately describe their diagnoses, for instance... [Read More](#)

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## REPORT: MORE DOCTORS ACCEPTING MEDICARE PATIENTS

Kelly Kennedy, USA TODAY

The number of physicians accepting new Medicare patients rose by one-third between 2007 and 2011 and is now higher than the number of physicians accepting new private insurance patients, according to a Department of Health and Human Services report obtained by USA TODAY.... [Read More](#)



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## WILL OBAMACARE AFFECT MEDICARE? MYTHS AND FACTS

Andrea Adleman, U.S. News and World Report



Setting the record straight about how the Affordable Care Act does -- or doesn't -- affect Medicare beneficiaries.

**Here are five myths and facts surrounding Medicare and the ACA.**

**Medicare is ending.** *False.* Obamacare is not replacing Medicare. In fact, AARP representatives say that Medicare will become stronger once the ACA is fully in effect. "Medicare's guaranteed benefits are protected in ways they hadn't been protected in the past," says Nicole Duritz, AARP's vice president for Health Education and Outreach.

Go to <http://health.usnews.com/health-news/health-insurance/articles/2013/08/19/will-obamacare-affect-medicare-myths-and-facts> to read the other four.

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## WAIVER FOR PAPER SOCIAL SECURITY CHECK TO BE EASIER FOR ELDERLY

Laura Green, The Palm Beach Post Laura Green



Seniors who were threatened with the loss of their benefits if they did not trade in their paper checks for Social Security benefits paid through a debit card or electronic deposit might be getting a reprieve.

The Treasury Department has agreed to make it easier for them to request a waiver to the electronic requirement, after a hearing held by Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., chairman of the Senate's Special Committee on Aging.

Millions of beneficiaries switched to an electronic payment with no trouble. But the Treasury Department was spending an inordinate amount of resources pressuring the remaining 3 percent, Nelson said. About 2.5 million beneficiaries receive paper checks.

"This group contains some of the most vulnerable and least tech-savvy of our seniors, and this committee is going to stand up for them," Nelson said in June. "It's hard to understand the value of getting them to switch."... [Read More](#)