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RI ARA

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NOW, more than ever!!!!"*

Affiliated with the Rhode Island AFL-CIO



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Retirees Breathe a Sigh of Relief Following State of the Union Address

President Addresses Income Inequality, Has No Plans to Cut Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid

*The following statement was issued Wednesday by
Richard Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance for Retired Americans:*

"Members of the Alliance for Retired Americans watched the President's State of the Union address on Tuesday night with an eye on Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and Income Inequality.

"We are relieved that the President did not mention support for the chained CPI cut to earned Social Security benefits or any cuts to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. Retirees let out a collective sigh of relief when the address was over. Now, we must work to increase Social Security benefits.



"The President has stood strong in stopping attempts by Republicans to raise Medicare's eligibility age. He has also stopped attempts, included in the Paul Ryan House Republican budget, to "block grant" Medicaid. Retirees are reassured that President Obama has held those positions.

"However, seniors wanted to see additional plans to close tax loopholes for the wealthiest Americans and corporations. Companies like GE will continue to avoid paying their share of taxes without changes on multiple fronts.

"Finally, we applaud the President's efforts to attack income inequality. An initiative to raise the minimum wage, and a renewed effort to extend the unemployment benefits for the long-term unemployed, are two major steps in the right direction."

National Council on Aging Offers 5 Ways Congress Can Help Seniors in 2014 Aging Program Funding, Medicare Low-Income Protections, Senior Hunger

WASHINGTON — With close to one-quarter of voters this November expected to be over age 65, the National Council on Aging (NCOA) suggests five ways Congress can help seniors this year—especially those in greatest need.

- 1. Restore funding for and modernize aging services**
- 2. Protect low-income Medicare beneficiaries**
- 3. Renew the Farm Bill to help fight senior hunger**
- 5. Pass immigration reform**

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) is the nation's leading nonprofit service and advocacy organization representing older adults and the community organizations that serve them. Our goal is to improve the health and economic security of 10 million older adults by 2020. For more than 60 years, NCOA has been a trusted voice and innovative problem-solver helping seniors navigate the challenges of aging in America. We work with local and national partners to give older adults tools and information to stay healthy and secure, and we advocate for programs and policies to improve the lives of all seniors, especially the most vulnerable.

For more information, please visit www.ncoa.org/Act.

Troubling Trade Deal on the Horizon

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.

IMPACT OF TRADE PROVISIONS ON PUBLIC PROGRAMS

This is very troubling, because it could lead to trade disputes for governments who use their leveraging power to lower drug and device prices in public programs. In the U.S., several public programs could be impacted, including the following:

Medicaid Preferred Drug Lists - all states have a preferred list of drugs, or formularies for their Medicaid programs.

Medicaid Drug Rebate Program - This program requires drug manufacturers who want to have their products covered by Medicaid to enter into a national rebate agreement with the Secretary of HHS.

Public Health Services Act Section 340B Drug Pricing Program – The 340B Program makes discounted prescription drugs available to safety-net providers, such as community health centers, public hospitals, rural critical access hospitals, Ryan White clinics and others that provide medicines to low income patients who are not eligible for Medicaid and who are treated on an outpatient basis.

ACA Discounts for Certain Medicare Part D Beneficiaries – The Affordable Care Act established a discount program for brand named and generic drugs for individuals who fall in the “doughnut hole”.

The Alliance for Retired Americans opposes an agreement that affect existing programs that help lower drug prices for seniors and other low-income beneficiaries.

Moreover, the trade provisions do not include therapeutic value as a factor in pricing and listing decisions, prioritizing competitive market-derived and patent value factors over considerations of how efficacious a product may be, how cost-effective it is compared to other products or how safe it may be.

The Alliance for Retired Americans believes the trade agreement should include provisions that take into account the efficaciousness, cost-effectiveness and safety of the product.

Future programs that could be affected:

Medicare Drug Rebates - The President's FY 2014 budget and the Rockefeller/Waxman Prescription Drug Savings Act (S.740 and H.R. 1588) proposed requiring pharmaceutical manufacturers to provide discounts (rebates) for low-income beneficiaries under Medicare, like they do under Medicaid.

Price Negotiations - During the debate of the 2003 Medicare Modernization and Improvement Act – the law that created the Medicare Part D prescription drug program -- many groups, including the Alliance for Retired Americans, advocated for the government to negotiate drug pricing or create a separate public option under Part D that would allow the government to set drug prices. In the end, the law does not allow the government to negotiate prices. However, if a future Congress were to enact a public option, this could be subject to a challenge under the trade agreement.

The Alliance for Retired Americans opposes an agreement that would tie the hands of the government to negotiate drug listing or pricing policies in the future.

The Office of U.S. Trade Representative has met with consumers group and indicated to them that the language in TPP has changed from the original leaked text, but consumer groups are not able to look at the language.

The Alliance for Retired Americans believes trade deals should be conducted in a more transparent and open fashion.

Fast Track proposal - The “Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities Act” (H.R. 3830 & S. 1900) was introduced on January 9, 2014 to help expedite free trade agreements. If it were enacted, trade pact implementing legislation would be guaranteed House and Senate votes within 90 days, with all floor amendments forbidden and a maximum of 20 hours of debate.

The Alliance for Retired Americans opposes “fast track” legislation, which would erode congressional authority and provide less time for Congress to review trade deals.

Social Security Advised to Return to Mailing Paper Statement by Advisory Board

MySSA online is commendable but advisory board still has three big concerns

By Tucker Sutherland, editor, SeniorJournal.com



There are probably millions of senior citizens cheering the Social Security Advisory Board today after it released a statement yesterday recommending the Social Security Administration return to the practice of mailing an annual Social Security Statement to beneficiaries. That paper statement was discontinued in 2011 and the MySSA online portal was introduced as the way to get information.

“Since its inception more than 25 years ago, the *Social Security Statement* has been a direct means of communicating with taxpayers and beneficiaries,” the board stated in a public statement.

“The document was intended to serve three important purposes:

- 1) improve public understanding of Social Security;
- 2) assist in planning for retirement security; and
- 3) provide workers an opportunity to correct any errors in their earnings record.”

The board applauded SSA’s decision to provide the *Statement* in an online format, but said, “Serious concerns remain.”

Its first concern, about the decision to suspend paper mailings, is that it violates the law requiring SSA to provide statements annually to eligible individuals.

The board’s statement added as the second concern that “Social Security participants may be unaware that SSA suspended mailing the *Statement*.” [...Read More](#)

Medicare Rights University Launched by Medicare Rights Center

A 'one-of-a-kind' online curriculum for health care and insurance professionals

The Medicare Rights Center today announced the launch of [Medicare Rights University](#) (MRU), a web-based curriculum designed to empower any professional to better help their own clients, patients, employees, retirees, and others navigate a multitude of Medicare questions.



Building on Medicare Rights’ 25 years of health care counseling and educational expertise, MRU offers a 17-course, video-based Core Curriculum complete with a self-assessment tool, in-depth and user-friendly Medicare content, quizzes to test knowledge, and downloadable materials...[Read More](#)

More Benefits Emerge for Liver Disease, Diabetes from DHA in Fish Oil's Omega-3 Fatty Acids

DHA used at levels that prescribed to reduce blood triglycerides appeared to have many unanticipated healthy effects



A study of the metabolic effects of omega-3 fatty acids, especially DHA, concludes that these compounds from fish oil may have an even wider range of biological impacts than previously considered, and suggests they could be of significant value in the prevention of fatty liver disease. One study suggested that DHA may also reduce the formation of harmful glucose metabolites linked to diabetic complications.

The research, done by scientists at Oregon State University and several other institutions, was one of the first of its type to use “metabolomics,” an analysis of metabolites that reflect the many biological effects of omega-3 fatty acids on the liver. It also explored the challenges this organ faces from the “Western diet” that increasingly is linked to liver inflammation, fibrosis, cirrhosis and sometimes liver failure.

The results were surprising, researchers say.

Supplements of DHA, used at levels that are sometimes prescribed to reduce blood triglycerides, appeared to have many unanticipated effects. There were observable changes in vitamin and carbohydrate metabolism, protein and amino acid function, as well as lipid metabolism.

Supplementation with DHA partially or totally prevented metabolic damage through those pathways often linked to the Western diet – excessive consumption of red meat, sugar, saturated fat and processed grains...[Read More](#)

Physically Active Men Live Longer After Cancer, Cardiovascular Disease; Reduce Heart Failure

Most active older cancer survivors 38% less likely to die of cancer; 49% less likely to die of cardiovascular disease



Two new studies have found physical activity is very beneficial for older men. The results of one reports exercise it significantly extends the lives of senior cancer and cardiovascular disease survivors, and the other concludes it reduces heart failure risk.

The research released today in the *Journal of Physical Activity & Health* studied 1,021 senior men with an average age of 71. During the period while the men were followed, those who expended more than 12,600 calories per week in physical activity were 48 percent less likely to die of any cause than those who burned fewer than 2,100 calories per week.

In the second study, published earlier this week in the American Heart Association journal *Circulation: Heart Failure*, the researchers found that sitting for long periods increases heart failure risk in men (ages 45 to 69), even for those who exercise regularly.

Lives Extended for Cancer, Cardiovascular Disease Survivors

Many cancer survivors are living longer, due to earlier diagnosis and better treatment, and their numbers are increasing rapidly. "Thus physical activity should be actively promoted to such individuals to enhance longevity," researchers concluded...[Read More](#)

Senior Citizens Leading Rapid Increase in Traumatic Spinal Cord Injuries in U.S.

Rates rising fastest among those over 65, and most injuries now due to falls, not car crashes

Senior citizens are driving up the number of serious traumatic spinal cord injuries in the United States, and the leading cause no longer appears to be motor vehicle crashes, but falls, new Johns Hopkins research suggests. These injuries - whose symptoms range from temporary numbness to full-blown paralysis — are rising fastest among older people, suggesting that efforts to prevent falls in the elderly could significantly curb the number of spinal injuries.

Falls were the leading cause of traumatic spinal cord injury over the three-year study period (41.5 percent), followed by motor vehicle crashes (35.5 percent). Fall-related spinal cord injuries increased during the study period overall. Among the elderly, they increased from 23.6 percent to 30 percent of injuries.

The average age of adults with a traumatic spinal cord injury in a previous study that covered the years 2000 to 2005 was 41; the new study suggests it is now 51.

"We have demonstrated how costly traumatic spinal cord injury is and how lethal and disabling it can be among older people," says Shalini Selvarajah, M.D., M.P.H., a postdoctoral surgical research fellow at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and leader of the study published online in the *Journal of Neurotrauma*. "It's an area that is ripe for prevention."...[Read More](#)



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.

ADD
YOUR
NAME

**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

ADD
YOUR
NAME

**Get The Message Out:
SIGN THE PETITION!!!!!!**

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RHODE ISLAND ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS

DAY WITH THE PROVIDENCE BRUINS



VS.



P-BRUINS VS. PORTLAND PIRATES

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APRIL 6**

3:05 AT THE DUNK



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TICKETS ONLY \$17

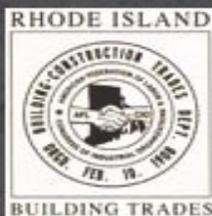
\$2 PER TICKET BACK TO BIG BROTHERS

TO ORDER TICKETS PLEASE CONTACT:

JOHN PERNORIO AT

RIARAJAP@HOTMAIL.COM

DEADLINE TO PURCHASE IS MARCH 6, 2014



- Special group rate price of only \$17 per ticket for all members, family and friends for great lower level seating!
- A free Providence Bruins hat for every child in attendance
- \$2 back to the Big Brothers of RI
- Tickets for the group will be in the lower level of the arena, usually in the corners and ends of the arena or in the 200 level center ice sections depending on availability.

This is a great event that supports our local unions and a great cause in The Big Brothers of Rhode Island!

The deadline to purchase is currently set for March 6th.