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RI ARA

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

Affiliated with the Rhode Island AFL-CIO

June 24, 2013 E-Newsletter



Published in house by the
RI ARA

Food stamps on the chopping block, another hit for seniors.



On Monday, June 17th, the Senate voted to cut roughly \$4 billion from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), more commonly known by its former name, food stamps. The 66-27 vote on the farm bill - a massive omnibus bill that funds federal agricultural and food policy through the Department of Agriculture - could pave the way for even more substantial cuts to SNAP to take place. By the end of the month, the House is expected to take up its own version of the farm bill, which includes a staggering \$20 billion in cuts to the program over the next ten years. Depending on how the House votes and the way in which the bills are reconciled, millions of food stamp beneficiaries could be at risk.

While not as drastic as the House's version, which substantially alters eligibility requirements for the program and threatens to throw millions off the program's rolls, the Senate's cuts to SNAP are far from negligible. The legislation passed includes new limits on SNAP eligibility for college students and restrictions on the ability of states to disburse food stamp benefits in conjunction with the low-income heating-assistance program. It even includes a seemingly non-sequitur provision that would prevent lottery winners from receiving benefit.

Only two Democratic Senators voted against the bill-Jack Reed and Sheldon Whitehouse, both of Rhode Island. Supporters of the Senate bill included liberals who oppose the cuts in the House version, like Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa). Many of these Democrats seemed willing to accept some SNAP cuts in exchange for making some progress on passing a farm bill... [Read More](#)

Strengthening Social Security

Throughout these turbulent times, Social Security has been the one saving grace, delivering its guaranteed benefits on time and without interruption. Though Social Security's hard-earned benefits are modest - they are vitally important to all who rely on them, including seniors, people with disabilities and families of deceased workers. In fact, over 54 million Americans - 1 out of every 4 households - rely on Social Security's lifetime, guaranteed benefits.

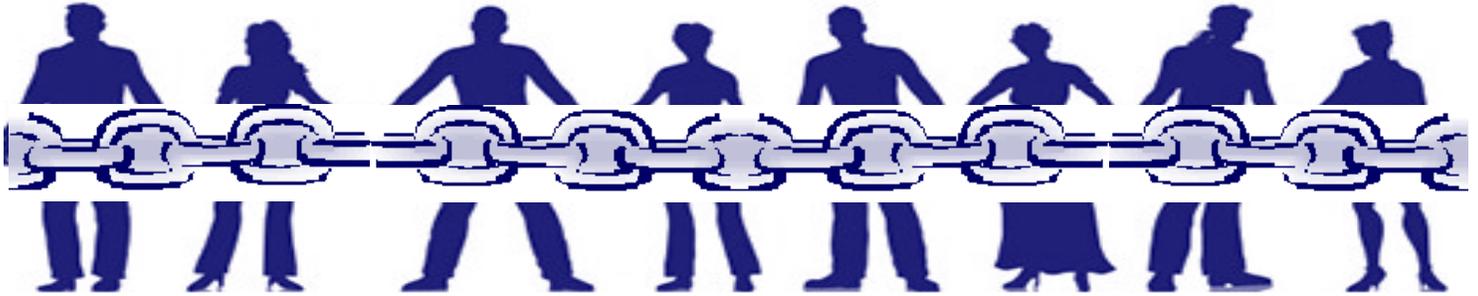
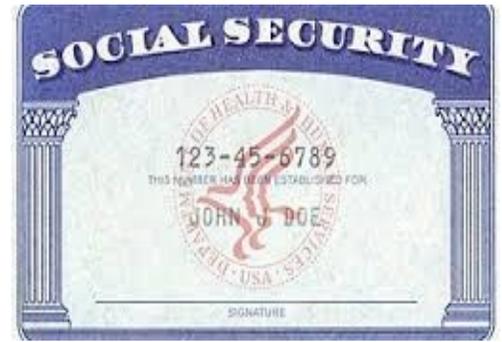
The Strengthening Social Security Act includes a number of provisions that strengthen Social Security by improving the solvency of the Social Security Trust Funds and, at the same time, improve the benefit calculations and annual cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) for all Social Security programs.

Increases Social Security Benefits: By adjusting the benefit formula, the Strengthening Social Security Act increases Social Security benefits on average by about \$65 per month or \$800 per year.

Adopts the CPI-E to Calculate Cost of Living Adjustments: In requiring the use of the Consumer Price Index for Elderly Consumers (CPI-E) to measure Social Security's COLA, the Strengthening Social Security Act ensures that Social Security benefits keep pace with the rising costs of goods and services typically used by older Americans.

Strengthens the Social Security Trust Fund: To pay for these benefit improvements and to ensure Social Security is solvent for years to come, the Strengthening Social Security Act raises and ultimately scraps the cap on earnings subject to Social Security contributions (currently capped at \$113,700) over a 5 year period. Benefits on these additional earnings would similarly be phased in over that period. This change alone extends the life of the Social Security Trust Fund through 2049 (currently 2035 expiration).





**Some Cuts Never Heal
Stand With Us &
Senator Sheldon Whitehouse
Congressman James Langevin
Against the Chained CPI
Social Security Benefit Cut**

**National Day of Action
Tuesday, July 2, 2013 • 10:30 AM**

**Salvatore Mancini Activity & Resource Center
2 Atlantic Blvd., North Providence, RI
Contact John A Pernorio, RI ARA President
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THE SUPREME COURT RULES AGAINST BIG PHARMA

Dylan Matthews, Washington Post



The court is allowing the Federal Trade Commission to keep pursuing pharmaceutical companies for “pay to play” arrangements, wherein the companies pay generic manufacturers to keep cheap versions of drugs off the market. The case is *FTC v. Actavis*.

Stephen Breyer wrote the opinion, joined by Anthony Kennedy, Sonia Sotomayor, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and Elena Kagan. John Roberts dissented, joined by Clarence Thomas and Antonin Scalia. Samuel Alito recused himself....[Read Ruling](#)

FROM CANCER PATIENTS TO HEAD START, IMPACT OF SEQUESTER CUTS SLOWLY RIPPLES ACROSS NATION

Associated Press

The first warnings about the spending cuts were dire.

In March, as the sweeping \$85 billion reductions known as sequestration kicked in, President Barack Obama called them “stupid” and “arbitrary” and said they could thwart economic progress. Opponents said the administration was using scare tactics, predicting doom even though the cuts amounted to a tiny slice of the federal budget.

There is pain and anxiety notably among the poor, the elderly and the sick — and social service agencies that serve them...[Read some of their stories](#)



MEDICARE PANEL URGES CUTS TO HOSPITAL PAYMENTS FOR SERVICES DOCTORS OFFER FOR LESS

Robert Pear, New York Time



A federal advisory panel said Friday, June 14th that Congress should move immediately to cut payments to hospitals for many services that can be provided at much lower cost in doctors’ offices.

The Medicare Payment Advisory Commission said the current payment disparities had created incentives for hospitals to buy physician practices, driving up costs for the Medicare program and for beneficiaries. Hospital buyouts of doctors, turning independent practitioners into hospital employees, have also led to higher spending by private insurers and higher co-payments for their policyholders, the commission said...[Read More](#)

Help Sen. Bernie Sanders Address Poverty among Seniors

Last month, Sen. Sanders, chairman of the subcommittee on Primary Health and Aging of the Senate’s Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, introduced S. 1028, the Older Americans Act (OAA) Amendments of 2013. This legislation would reauthorize and strengthen the OAA, which supports Meals on Wheels and other critical programs for seniors. This past Wednesday, Sanders held a hearing to discuss the role of the OAA in addressing poverty and hunger among seniors. The hearing took place as the HELP Committee attempts to pass the reauthorization of the OAA before the August recess.



The HELP Committee is marking up S. 1028, now cosponsored by 17 Senators (<http://tinyurl.com/ocalvj9>), in the coming weeks. Contact your Senators, especially those on the HELP Committee (<http://www.help.senate.gov>), to share your support of S. 1028 as it moves through the Committee. To read Sen. Sanders’ related piece this week in *Politico*, “Keep Meals on Wheels Going,” go to <http://tinyurl.com/o9q2neu>

