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# RI ARA

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

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

**June 30, 2014 E-Newsletter**



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RI ARA

## ***It's Time To Crack Down On Secret Election Spending***



On June 24, 2014, Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) introduced a bill to force secret, unlimited election spending out of the shadows. The DISCLOSE Act, supported by 51 Democratic Senators, would shine a light on the billionaires and huge corporations behind toxic attack ads polluting our airwaves and reducing our voice in elections.

Senate Democrats are asking a simple question, "*will Senate Republicans stand with the everyday Americans whose voices are drowned out by unlimited, secret money in politics, or will they stand with the billionaires and corporations who want to buy our democracy?*"

As we fight to create a democracy that truly works for all of us and pass a constitutional amendment to overturn *Citizens United*, the DISCLOSE Act is an important first step. It would require organizations spending money in elections to promptly disclose donors who have given \$10,000 or more during an election cycle.

**This little bit of sunshine will allow us to see which corporations and big money campaign donors are spending millions to reduce our voice and rig the system against working people.**

**Take action to support the DISCLOSE Act today and help stand up for a democracy of, by and for the people.**

ADD  
YOUR  
NAME

### **RI AFL-CIO Executive Board Resolution:**

#### **Support U.S. Postal Workers; Rhode Island AFL-CIO, Don't Buy Staples**

**Whereas**, the U.S. Postal Service has a no-bid, sweetheart deal with Staples to operate postal counters in 82 Staples stores and to provide nearly all the services U.S. Post Offices provide;

**Whereas**, the USPS and Staples plan to expand the program to Staples' 1,500 U.S. stores;

**Whereas**, the USPS and Staples have refused to staff Staples' postal units with unionized USPS employees who have the training and experience to properly handle U.S. Mail, who have sworn an oath to uphold the highest standards of public service, and who are accountable to the American people;

**Whereas**, low-wage, non-union "postal" jobs at Staples will inevitably replace the living-wage, union jobs of U.S. Postal Service employees and Staples stores will inevitably replace U.S. Post Offices;

**Whereas**, privatizing the handling of U.S. Mail will jeopardize the sanctity and security of the mail;

**Whereas**, postal workers have been vigorously fighting this blatant attempt to privatize the U.S. Postal Service, replace their living-wage jobs with low-wage jobs, and degrade service, and whereas they have asked for our support;

**Whereas**, we care about high-quality public services, protecting living-wage jobs, and maintaining universal, affordable mail service for the American people and we oppose privatization of public services;

**Therefore be it:** Resolved that the Rhode Island AFL-CIO supports the American Postal Workers Union in its efforts to protect living-wage jobs and its insistence on the highest possible standards of customer service;

**Be it further resolved** that the Rhode Island AFL-CIO opposes efforts to privatize postal operations;

**Be it further resolved** that the Rhode Island AFL-CIO urges members, friends, colleagues and family members to stop shopping at Staples stores until further notice;

**Be it finally resolved** that this call to boycott Staples will be communicated immediately to members of the Rhode Island AFL-CIO, the news media, the APWU and Staples headquarters.

## Social Security Clarifies Policy on Same-Sex Married Couples to Process More Claims

**Begins processing many claims in states that do not recognize same-sex marriages or non-marital legal relationships - Also see 'Sen. Wyden Welcomes Carolyn Colvin to Head Social Security'**



Social Security has published new instructions that allow the agency to process more claims in which entitlement or eligibility is affected by a same-sex relationship. These instructions come in response to last year's Supreme Court decision in *U.S. vs. Windsor*, which found Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act unconstitutional.

This latest policy development lets the agency recognize some non-marital legal relationships as marriages for determining entitlement to benefits. These instructions also allow Social Security to begin processing many claims in states that do not recognize same-sex marriages or non-marital legal relationships.

"We have consulted with the Department of Justice and determined that the Social Security Act requires the agency to follow state law in Social Security cases. The new policy also addresses Supplemental Security Income claims based on same-sex relationships," SSA says in a news release issued today.

"As with previous same-sex marriage policies, we worked closely with the Department of Justice," said Carolyn W. Colvin, Acting Commissioner of Social Security. "We are bound by the law within the Social Security Act, and we have to respect state laws. We remain committed to treating all Americans fairly, with dignity, and respect."

SSA also says that any person believing they are entitled or eligible to receive benefits should **apply right away**.

Those with questions, are referred to SSA's **frequently asked questions**.

If you have questions about how a same-sex marriage or non-marital legal relationship may affect your claim or to tell us if you are married, separated or divorced, please call **1-800-772-1213** (TTY **1-800-325-0778**) or contact **your local Social Security office**.

Advocates, members of the media, and others with general questions about same-sex marriage or non-marital legal relationship, and Social Security Administration programs, may contact their local **Regional Communications Director**.

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## Medicare Fraud Prevention System Finds \$210 Million in Improper Payments in Second Year

**CMS took action against 938 providers and suppliers, says report sent to Congress today; anti-fraud strategy recovered \$19.2 billion in last five years**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services announced today that its "state-of-the-art Fraud Prevention System" discovered or prevented more than \$210 million in improper Medicare fee-for-service payments, nearly double the identified savings of \$115.4 million achieved during the first year of the program. It also resulted in CMS taking action against 938 providers and suppliers, according to a report sent to Congress today.

The actions included revocation of billing privileges, implementation of prepayment review edits, referrals to law enforcement, and suspension of payments.

"CMS is using the best of private sector technology to move beyond the 'pay-and-chase' approach to protect the Medicare Trust Funds," said CMS Administrator Marilyn Tavenner.

"While CMS is continuing to enhance the Fraud Prevention System we have demonstrated that investing in cutting-edge technology pays off for taxpayers and Medicare beneficiaries."

The Fraud Prevention System is a key element of the anti-fraud strategy that has led to a record \$19.2 billion in fraud recoveries over the previous five years. The Fraud Prevention System uses predictive algorithms and other sophisticated analytics to analyze billing patterns against every Medicare fee-for-service claim.

Building on its expert knowledge for investigators and analysts, CMS is leading the government and healthcare industry in systematically applying advanced analytics on a nationwide scale. The system also uses other data sources including compromised Medicare identification numbers and complaints made through 1-800-MEDICARE...**Read More**



## Sensors Monitor Seniors' Health at Home, Sync Data from Home to Hospital, Call Help

Streamlined information-sharing is in development now by University of Missouri researchers



It will be great when technology has developed the ability to monitor senior citizens that are at risk of falling in their homes, alerts first responders of a fall and then forwards necessary health information to the hospital about to receive the patient. Such streamlined information-sharing is in development now by University of Missouri researchers.

Technological advances have provided medical professionals with many devices and systems to collect and analyze patients' health information, but many of these technologies do not share data with each other, the researchers say. The lack of streamlined information-sharing creates inefficiencies and, potentially, inconsistencies in patient care.

The UM researchers are working to develop an in-home health monitoring and alert system that streams patients' individualized health information between homes and hospitals. The system's ability to provide comprehensive health information could lead to better care for patients as well as reduced costs for individuals and health systems...[Read More](#)

## Intellectual Enrichment Again Proven to Delay Cognitive Decline in Seniors

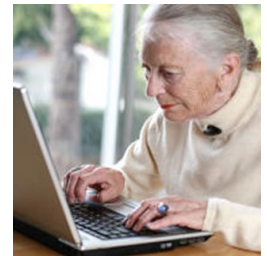
Latest study from Mayo Clinic published in *JAMA Neurology*  
suggests even those with high risk gene can delay decline for years

The evidence continues to mount that the way to protect against the common cognitive decline seen in too many senior citizens is to maintain a lifestyle of intellectual enrichment throughout life. A new study from the Mayo Clinic Study of Aging confirms it again in a report appearing in today's edition of *JAMA Neurology*, and add that it may delay dementia as long as nine years, even in high risk seniors.

Previous research has linked intellectual enrichment with possible protection against cognitive decline.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the association of lifetime intellectual enrichment with baseline cognitive performance and rate of cognitive decline in an older population without dementia and to estimate the years of protection provided against cognitive impairment by these factors.

The researchers found that higher scores that gauged education (years of school completed) and occupation (based on attributes, complexities of a job), as well as higher levels of mid/late-life cognitive activity (e.g., reading books, participating in social activities and doing computer activities at least three times per week) were linked to better cognition in older patients...[Read More](#)



## Right Amount of Sleep Very Important to Cognitive Ability of Seniors Says International Study

University of Oregon-led research finds women sleeping longer and struggling with quality – [see video](#)



Theresa E. Gildner  
"How long you sleep really does matter" - [click to video](#)

Middle aged or older people who get six to nine hours of sleep per night think better that those who sleep fewer or even more hours, report researchers who were looking at cognitive decline and dementia as people age.

Maybe turning to sleep gadgets -- wristbands, sound therapy and sleep-monitoring smartphone apps -- is a good idea, suggest the University of Oregon researchers who led this study.

"We wanted to look at aging, particularly dementia and cognitive decline as people get older, and the importance of sleep. Our results provide compelling evidence that sleep matters a lot," said lead author Theresa E. Gildner, a doctoral student in the UO's anthropology department "In all six countries, which are very different culturally, economically and environmentally - despite all these differences - you see similar patterns emerging." ....[Read More](#)

## 3D Mammography Offers New Hope for Women: Finds More Invasive Cancers, Reduces Call-Backs

Largest study to date tested nearly half million women; could lead to changes in standards of care



Emily F. Conant, M.D., Penn Medicine examines 3D mammography. Study finds it detects more invasive cancers and reduces call-back rates - published in *JAMA*.

Researchers from Penn Medicine and other institutions have found that 3D mammography - known as digital breast tomosynthesis - will find significantly more invasive, or potentially lethal, cancers than a traditional mammogram alone and reduced call-backs for additional imaging. The study is reported today in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*.

This is the largest study reported to date - with nearly a half a million women - measuring the effectiveness of the technology, and could potentially lead to a change in the standard of care for breast screening.

"It's the most exciting improvement to mammography that I have seen in my career, even more important for women than the conversion from film-screen mammography to digital mammography," said senior author **Emily F. Conant, MD**, chief of Breast Imaging the department of Radiology at the **Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania**. "3D mammography finds more clinically significant breast cancers earlier, which is the key so that women have more treatment options and ultimately better health outcomes."

In the retrospective study, the researchers looked at 281,187 digital mammography examinations and 173,663 examinations with both tomosynthesis and digital mammography between 2010 and 2012. The data set included women from a wide

range of breast cancer screening programs that were both geographically diverse and included academic and community practices, 13 in total.

Researchers found 41 percent more invasive cancers when women were screened with tomosynthesis plus digital compared to digital mammography alone. The use of tomosynthesis also reduced the number of women called back for additional testing by 15 percent...[Read More](#)

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### 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.

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

**Petition Subject: Observation Stays: "Current Hospital Issues in the Medicare Program"**

ADD  
YOUR  
NAME

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

**Petition Subject: 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!!!!**

**Petition Subject: 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!!!!**