



### The Committee for Social Security Fairness

In the May 18, 2015 edition of the RI ARA E-Newsletter, there was an article about **The Case to Repeal the Punitive Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP)**. Inadvertently, credit was not given and did not include the link to the organization, **Social Security Fairness**, that worked on the Presentation.

#### About Social Security Fairness:

##### The Committee for Social Security Fairness:

A Grassroots movement of active and retired public servants of all professions, working to repeal the GPO WEP. Join us as an individual and ask your professional group to join us too.

##### Our Goal is to:

**Educate:** Inform the public about the injustice of the GPO and WEP, two Social Security provisions which penalize 1/3 of all educators and 1/5 of all public employees.

**Motivate:** Energize all affected, both active and retired, to speak up for justice.

**Activate:** Coordinate with all professional organizations affected in efforts to repeal the GPO/WEP.

**Many people do not know about or understand these injustices. We must make our voices heard.**

Please read the **hardship stories** of people who have been affected by GPO/WEP.

To contact them and learn more about the Committee for Social Security Fairness and Watch their PowerPoint Presentation for the whole story, visit <http://www.ssfairness.com/>

### Retirement Security Fight Focused on Younger Workers

by Kevin Zapf Hanes

**Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) is greeted with a standing ovation as she prepares to address the White House Conference on Aging in Boston.**



BOSTON – The **White House Conference on Aging** closed its regional meetings here May 28 with AFSCME members from Rhode Island and Massachusetts joining the Association of Retired Americans in demanding that retirement solutions be focused on protecting working people in their later years.

AFSCME Retirees from Chapters 93 and 94 attended to keep pressure on the administration to strengthen public-sector pensions and Social Security. Previous conferences in **Ohio, Arizona and Washington state** also included many AFSCME retirees.

Among the speakers was U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), who has been an outspoken champion of the middle class. She reminded the audience that preserving Social Security is not only about those who are receiving it now, but young workers who will need it in the future.

“Senator Warren is correct,” said Barbara Mann, AFSCME Retiree Chapter 93 treasurer. “This fight is about maintaining opportunity across generations for a strong middle class and a secure retirement.”

Without modest Social Security payments, the number of older Americans living in poverty would skyrocket to more than 44 percent. “The potential to have almost half of all American retirees living in poverty motivates us all to stand up now to protect the future of our children and grandchildren,” said AFSCME Council 94 Executive Vice Pres. Mary Riley, also in attendance.

**Michael Connelly, President, AFSCME Retiree Chapter 94, Rhode Island**, reminded participants of the retirement security breakout group that “public-sector pensions are crucial to maintaining strong services for all residents of our towns, cities and states. Public employees have paid into their pensions, on time every time – it is time for elected officials to meet their obligation.”...**Read More**



## Opposition to Trans Pacific Partnership Continues to be High Priority for Activists



Richard Fiesta

**The Hill** quoted Alliance executive director **Richard Fiesta** in a story about seniors groups and their positions on the Trans Pacific Partnership trade deal.

"This is as important to us as the issues surrounding Social Security and Medicare," said Alliance executive director **Richard Fiesta**. "We are dedicating a lot of resources."

The Alliance is urging U.S. House members to oppose plans to cut \$950 million from Medicare to fund the Trade Adjustment Assistance program, which assists displaced workers. Those cuts include \$700 million through a sequestration provision and another \$250 million over ten years for hospital dialysis centers treating people with acute kidney injuries.

"A lot of members and staff aren't fully familiar with [TPP's] effect on prescription drug prices," continued Fiesta in *The Hill*. "We're getting a lot of 'Gee, I didn't know that.'"

"Cutting \$950 million from Medicare to pay for something completely unrelated makes absolutely no sense and will compromise the integrity of the program," he added later.

The Alliance is stressing to U.S. House members that corporations should be asked to step up to the plate and fund TAA, not the more than 53 million seniors or disabled Medicare beneficiaries.

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## David N. Cicilline: A bad deal for American workers

By David N. Cicilline

Twenty one years ago, the proponents of the North American Free Trade Agreement argued it would create 200,000 American jobs in two years, open new markets for American goods, and at the same time, lift the standard of living in Mexico. Opponents of NAFTA warned that if the deal was approved we would hear "a giant sucking sound going south."

Two decades later, as the United States considers the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement, we are again faced with the same arguments. As with NAFTA, proponents of this latest trade deal are promising it will be the rising tide that lifts all boats. For hard-working Americans, there is, and should be, a great deal of concern that the TPP will destroy the manufacturing industry we have managed to retain in the United States and severely damage our growing sector of advanced manufacturing. We should not enter into another poorly negotiated and lopsided trade deal that will send more American jobs overseas.

As a strong proponent of "Buy American" provisions and the "Make it in America" agenda in Congress, I'm particularly concerned that, under the proposed language, a TPP country could benefit from "Buy American" status, which would eliminate incentives that help American manufacturers. This trade deal also does nothing to confront the practice of currency manipulation, which forces American businesses and manufacturers to compete with countries that purposely devalue currency to increase their exports and to make it more difficult for American exports to flow freely and fairly...[Read Article](#)



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## Members of 'my Social Security' can get replacement cards online

SSA announces to service to further encourage members to sign-up for site to do business with the agency



The Social Security Administration today introduced the expansion of online services available through its my Social Security portal – seniors and others with a Social Security membership who have also established a my Social Security account can now obtain a replacement card online.



The online connection is [www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount).

"I'm excited about this newest online feature to the agency's my Social Security portal and the added convenience we're providing Medicare beneficiaries," Acting Commissioner Carolyn W. Colvin said.

"Any my Social Security account holder who misplaces their Medicare card will be able to request a replacement card using their online my Social Security account."

Requesting a replacement card through my Social Security account is a convenient, cost-effective and secure way to ensure Medicare beneficiaries have a critical piece of identification available when required by medical providers as proof of Medicare coverage, according to the announcement.

Simply access your online my Social Security account and select the "Replacement Documents" tab. Then select "Mail my replacement Medicare card." After you request a card, it will arrive in the mail in approximately 30 days, according to the SSA.

my Social Security is a secure, online hub for doing business with Social Security, and more than 19 million people have created a personal account. Current Social Security beneficiaries can manage their account - change an address, adjust direct deposit, obtain a benefit verification letter, or request a replacement SSA-1099.

Account holders still in the workforce can verify their earnings, and obtain estimates of future benefits. In addition to those existing services, Medicare beneficiaries will now be able to request a replacement Medicare card without waiting for a replacement form in the mail.

For more information about my Social Security or to establish an account visit [www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount).

## Five top fitness activities senior citizens can do easily at home

All seniors know they need exercise and here are some easy ways to get it

By Alan Wu of [Bay Alarm Medical](#)



It would be difficult to find a senior citizen who does not know that regular physical activity can reduce the risk of a variety of serious ailments. An active lifestyle, however, can become challenging as aging bodies become more susceptible to arthritis, joint pains, and other health problems. To celebrate National Senior Health Fitness Day yesterday, Bay Alarm Medical has suggested five activities that seniors may do to exercise easily and safely in their homes.

### 1) Balancing:

Although balancing isn't an obvious part of exercising, everyday activities require the ability to control your body's position. From getting out of bed, to walking on an uneven sidewalk, and standing on tiptoes to reach a high shelf, many daily activities involve balance.

A few gentle, at-home exercises done daily are essential to enhancing body coordination and decreasing the risk of falling. Some great balance activities include marching in place and "tightrope" walking – or walking by placing one foot's heel directly in front of the other foot's toes. If alone, take precautions to exercise next to a chair or railing that can be used for support.

### 2) Endurance Aerobic Activities:

Endurance, or aerobic activities, increase your breathing and heartbeat, which helps to improve heart and lung health. This can make chores like vacuuming and raking the yard easier to do.

One of the easiest forms of endurance work is brisk walking. If you have balance or joint trouble, start by walking on flat surfaces or indoor at a mall. You can also take exercise classes at your local community or senior center.

As much as possible, try to exercise with another person, whether in your home or outside. Even healthy bodies can suffer sudden strains or accidents. During the times when you are exercising alone, you can feel more confident about your safety by wearing a medical alert device that allows you to instantly call for emergency help should you need it.

Companies like [Bay Alarm Medical](#) offer medical alert devices that instantly call emergency services with the touch of a button in case of a fall, dizziness or other in-home accidents.

### 3) Strength Training:

Strength exercises help build up muscle and bone, counteracting the weakness that can come with aging. Even slight improvements in muscle strength can go a long way in facilitating independence and to be able to do activities like carrying groceries, sweeping, and getting up from a chair.

Seated movements such as toe stands, knee curls, and leg extensions do not require dumbbells. Do strength-training exercises two to three times a week rather than daily, so muscles can recover, and you slowly, safely build intensity.

### 4) Stretches:

As we age, connective tissues become less elastic so stretching is fundamental to maintaining a functioning range of motion. Stretching should not cause pain or serious fatigue. Make sure to warm your muscles briefly prior to stretching. Take in deep breaths in each stretch for up to 60 seconds for maximum benefit and always be aware of the position of your spine.

### 5) Video Games:

Seniors are joining the world of video games and are also a great way to connect with children and grandchildren. With popular video game consoles such as Nintendo Wii and Xbox Kinect, seniors can improve their fitness at home, mixing workouts with fun.

The Wii offers a variety of games such as bowling, tennis, dancing, yoga and more – which are suitable for any age and physical level. Because the games are very interactive and have a realistic feel, playing video games can give the same adrenaline rush as a workout, but in a safer environment.

While it may take a while to incorporate a regular exercise routine in your everyday, taking just a few minutes a day to be more active is critical to maintaining a healthy and independent lifestyle.

Most importantly, ensure home safety by discussing your exercises and progress with loved ones and doctors, or investing in a medical alert device as a safety measure.

► Read what the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, a division of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, has to say about [Physical Activity and Health for Older Adults](#).

► Source: [Bay Alarm Medical](#)





## Seniors age 75 and older run high risk using newer anticoagulant meds

### Use caution when considering anticoagulants, say Mayo Clinic researchers



If you are over age 75, and taking an anticoagulant, the old standard may be the gold standard, Mayo Clinic researchers in Phoenix and collaborators have determined. For older patients, particularly individuals greater than 75 years of age, the risk of gastrointestinal (GI) bleeding is 3 to 5 times higher when taking newer anticoagulant medications dabigatran or rivaroxaban compared to when using warfarin.

One of the most common reasons people take anticoagulant medication - which lessens the blood's tendency to clot - is to reduce potential or severity of clotting complications in patients with atrial fibrillation or venous thromboembolism.

People with atrial fibrillation and venous thromboembolism have a much higher risk of strokes, heart attacks and clots in the lungs and legs, which can result in disability or death.

Use of anticoagulants lessens the likelihood of stroke and other clotting complications, but brings a different set of risks, one of which is excessive bleeding due to reduced ability to form blood clots. Excessive GI bleeding in particular can itself be life threatening.

Warfarin has been in use since the 1950s, and is an effective anticoagulant. Because it is so powerful and long acting, users are required to have regular blood tests to monitor the effects... [Read More](#)

## Seniors who have trouble sorting out different smells face shorter lives

### This is not first study to find smell as factor in longevity.

A new study supports earlier findings that when older people have trouble distinguishing between odors they appear to have a shorter life span. The latest study of people on Medicare found a high death rate for those with the worse smell test scores, which was the same finding of a study released last October.

In the latest study, the mortality rate was 45% in participants with the lowest scores on a 40-item smell test, compared with 18% of participants with the highest scores during the four-year study..

This study included 1169 Medicare beneficiaries who scratched and sniffed individuals odorant strips and chose the best answer from four items listed as multiple-choice.

"The increased risk of death increased progressively with worse performance in the smell identification test and was highest in those with the worst smelling ability, even after adjusting for medical burden and dementia," said Dr. Davangere Devanand, lead author of the *Annals of Neurology* study.

"This was a study of older adults - the question that remains is whether young to middle -aged adults with impaired smell identification ability are at high risk as they grow older." ..[Read More](#)



Jayant Pinto, M.D., lead author of the study last year is shown with one of the Sniffin' Sticks used to test a patient's ability to identify scents. Photo by Robert Kozloff, University of Chicago

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

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

ADD YOUR NAME

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

**Petition Subject: House Concurrent Resolution 37 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 12 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!!!!**