



Senate Passes Budget that Cuts \$5.3 Trillion



Barbara

The Senate voted **51 to 48** on Tuesday to pass the first joint congressional budget plan in six years, ratifying a 10-year blueprint that would cut spending by \$5.3 trillion, overhaul Medicaid by turning it into block grants, and repeal President Obama’s health care law. The budget would cut off health insurance to as many as 27 million people covered by either Medicaid or the Affordable Care Act. It would include \$431 billion in unspecified cuts to Medicare over that decade.

For the plan to take effect, Republican committee chairmen would have to draft legislation imposing the cuts. But they have made little effort to do so, and *The New York Times* reports that committee leaders in both parties have begun calling for new negotiations on a more bipartisan approach.

The Senate voted nearly along party lines, with only two Republicans voting no: Senators Rand Paul of Kentucky and Ted Cruz of Texas. Both are candidates for the Republican presidential nomination who say the budget plan does not go far enough to shrink the government and cut spending. Sen David Vitter (R-LA) did not vote, and all Democrats voted in opposition.

“Once again, we have a plan to balance the budget largely on the backs of seniors,” said Barbara J. Easterling, President of the Alliance. “Only this time, even many of the Senators who voted for it don’t want it signed into law.”

American Postal Workers Union’s National Day of Action is Thursday

Members of the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) are holding a **National Day of Action** on Thursday, May 14th - six days before their Collective Bargaining Agreement expires. Allies from the Grand Alliance to Save our Public Postal Service, which includes the Alliance for Retired Americans, are being asked to help by attending an event from the Day of Action web listing and signing a **postcard to Postmaster General Megan Brennan** saying: “I Stand With Postal Workers.”

The “Grand Alliance” campaign is fighting for expanded and enhanced services from the U.S. Postal Service. Many of these expanded services, including postal banking, would benefit seniors and individuals with lower incomes. Reductions in postal service standards have delayed mail delivery and will close or consolidate over 80 different mail processing centers across America.

Ruben Burks, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance, said, “I ask Alliance members to help our friends, the postal workers, on Thursday. Please fill out a postcard and go to their website to find an event near you and show your support.”

House Judiciary Committee Advances Critical Legislation

Co-Sponsored By Cicilline to End Bulk Data Collection, Protect Civil Liberties

WASHINGTON – U.S. Congressman David N. Cicilline (D-RI) today worked with colleagues on the House Judiciary Committee to send the bipartisan USA FREEDOM Act, H.R. 2048, to the House floor. Cicilline is an original co-sponsor of the proposal that would end the NSA’s controversial collection of bulk data and enact other important civil liberties reforms while also protecting the security of the American people.



“The right to privacy is a sacred American value. Today is an important step forward to protect this right and keep the government out of the personal lives of law-abiding citizens,” said Cicilline. “I was pleased to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle today in order to move this bill out of committee, and I look forward to continuing this effort when the USA FREEDOM Act is considered by the full House of Representatives.”...[Read More](#)

Running out of money is more than just a worry for many seniors

Among those age 85 or older when they died, 20% had no assets left but their homes

By Michelle Andrews



For many older people and their families, particularly those dealing with conditions such as Alzheimer's or cancer that often require long-term, pricey medical care, running out of money is a nagging concern.

Families are right to be worried, according to a new study that analyzed data from nearly 1,200 people who died between 2010 and 2012 and who participated in the University of Michigan's **ongoing national Health and Retirement Study**.

Among people who were age 85 or older when they died, one in five had no assets left apart from their homes, and 12 percent had no assets left at all, only income from sources such as Social Security or pensions. The **analysis by the Employee Benefit Research Institute** found that those who died younger were even worse off. Among people who died between age 50 and 64, 30 percent were without assets and 37 percent had only their homes.

Families where someone died at a relatively young age tend to have lower incomes and assets, says Sudipto Banerjee, a research associate at EBRI and the study's author.

"People with lower assets and income tend to be in worse health," he says, noting that many studies have found a correlation between health and wealth, showing that wealthier people tend to live longer than poorer people.

The EBRI study didn't examine the reasons people's finances were often depleted at death, so there's no way to know the extent to which health care, specific illnesses or insurance coverage played a role.

Financial experts have long cautioned that medical care for seniors is an expensive concern, partly because some care related to Alzheimer's disease, for example, is not covered by insurance.

In addition, even with Medicare coverage and private insurance, seniors still can face large out-of-pocket expenses for major illnesses. According to an **estimate by Fidelity**, a 65-year-old couple who retired in 2014 would need \$220,000 to cover their health care costs during retirement.

Robert Reich: The Trans Pacific Partnership must be stopped

The former secretary of labor on why the deal is making the world safer for global corporations -- at our expense

ROBERT REICH, ROBERTREICH.ORG

The heinous Trans Pacific Partnership is now moving in Congress. It's not really about trade – most tariffs are now low – but about making the world safer for global corporations. It allows big global corporations to sue countries for health, safety, environmental, and labor protections that reduce corporate profits. Its so-called labor and environmental protections are unenforceable. And rather than strengthen America's hand against China (as its proponents claim), it only strengthens the hands of giant American-based corporations – whose loyalty is to their shareholders rather than to the United States. (These corporations will do whatever China wants if it helps their bottom lines.)



It's a bad deal for Americans. Please call your senators and your representative and tell them you don't want the Trans Pacific Partnership, and you don't want "fast-track" that allows it to speed through Congress without debate or amendment. **View Video**

Robert Reich: Nike is everything that's wrong with the U.S. economy

On Friday, May 8th President Obama gave a speech promoting the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Paradoxically, he's chosen to give it at Nike headquarters in Oregon.

Nike isn't the solution to the problem of stagnant wages in America. Nike is the problem.

It's true that over the past two years Nike has added 2,000 good-paying professional jobs at its Oregon headquarters, fulfilling the requirements of a controversial tax break it wrangled from the state legislature. That's good for Nike's new design, research and marketing employees.

But Nike's U.S. workers make only a tiny percent of Nike's products.

In fact, Americans made only 1 percent of the products that generated Nike's \$27.8 billion revenue last year. And Nike is moving ever more of its production abroad. Last year, a third of Nike's remaining 13,922 American production workers were laid off....**Read More**

People with a bleeding stroke have best chance in comprehensive stroke center

By Tucker Sutherland, editor & publisher

Stroke centers have equipment, personnel to deal with most severe strokes, including neurological critical



Recognize Stroke
- Face drooping
- Arm weakness
- Speech difficulty
- Time to call 911

People with hemorrhagic strokes (brain bleeds) are more likely to survive if they are treated at a comprehensive stroke center. If not in a stroke center, their loved ones should move them, says research leader.

That is just a fact that was proven again by research published in the *Journal of the American Heart Association*.

Hemorrhagic strokes, which account for about 13 percent of all strokes, are caused when a weakened blood vessel in the brain ruptures and bleeds in the surrounding brain.

Comprehensive stroke centers typically have the specialists and trained personnel to deal with patients with these ruptures or other types of bleeding in the brain. They also can provide neurological intensive care and 24-hour access to neurosurgery. The American Heart Association, in conjunction with the Joint Commission, accredits **Comprehensive Stroke Centers** that meet standards to treat the most complex stroke cases.

"Clinicians, especially emergency-room physicians, need to be aware of the severity and potential implications of hemorrhagic stroke and try to transfer patients to the hospital most capable of providing the full complement of care," says James S. McKinney, M.D., lead author and assistant professor of neurology at the Rutgers-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

"When a person is diagnosed with a hemorrhagic stroke, loved-ones should ask about the possibility of a transfer," he added.

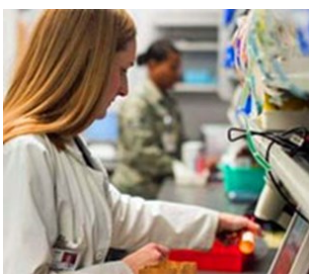
Researchers examined the 90-day survival of 36,981 patients with hemorrhagic strokes treated at 87 hospitals in New Jersey between 1996 and 2012.

Forty percent of the patients were treated at facilities designated as comprehensive stroke centers by 2012. The remainder were treated at non-stroke centers or at hospitals designated as primary stroke centers – facilities prepared to quickly identify **ischemic strokes** caused by blood clots (blocking the blood vessel to the brain). They deliver clot-dissolving medication, but which may not be prepared for higher level acute neurosurgical emergencies. Mortality rates included deaths from all causes and were adjusted for factors such as age...[Read More](#)

Statins tightly linked to diabetes, disease complications in large study

Risk of diabetes with statins has been known,

thought this was because people prescribed statins had greater medical risks to begin with



For the millions of seniors taking statins at the recommendation of their doctor, it has to be punishing to read week-after-week the new studies that often highlight some new risk. The latest study is a big one - 26,000 members of Tricare, the military's health system. The suggested link is big too - diabetes.

Those taking statin drugs to control their cholesterol were 87 percent more likely to develop diabetes.

The **study**, , confirms past findings on the link between the widely prescribed drugs and diabetes risk. But it is among the first to show the connection in a relatively healthy group of people. The study included only people who at baseline were free of heart disease, diabetes, and other severe chronic disease.

"In our study, statin use was associated with a significantly higher risk of new-onset diabetes, even in a very healthy population," says lead author Dr. Ishak Mansi.

"The risk of diabetes with statins has been known, but up until now it was thought that this might be due to the fact that people who were prescribed statins had greater medical risks to begin with."

Mansi is a physician-researcher with the VA North Texas Health System and the University of Texas Southwestern in Dallas.

The study was reported online April 28, 2015, in the *Journal of General Internal Medicine*....[Read More](#)

National Women's Health Week Targets Coronary Artery Disease



The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office on Women's Health has declared next week, May 10-16, 2015, National Women's Health Week. In conjunction with this occasion, the Alliance is joining the Coalition of Labor Union Women and other partners in shining a light on preventing coronary artery disease (CAD).

Heart Disease is the #1 cause of death of women in the United States, and CAD kills more Americans than all cancers combined. The Alliance wants retirees to know that women experience less obvious symptoms of CAD than men. They may experience tightness or pressure in the back, a burning sensation like heartburn, dizziness, back pain or sudden weakness. Getting older increases your risk of damaged arteries, and women should work with their doctors to find the right testing option. The only way to know if symptoms point to coronary artery disease is to get tested.

Help **spread the word** about coronary artery disease and be sure that people of all ages stay healthy.

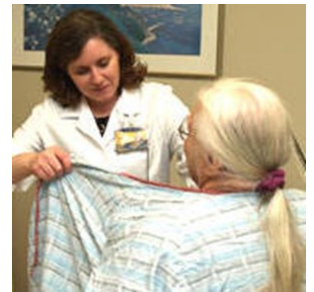
Senior citizens doing quite well at meeting cancer screening goals, CDC reports

CDC Healthy People 2020 reports on cancer screening targets for colorectal, breast and cervical cancers

By Senior Journal staff

Americans are not doing very well at being screened for key cancers, says a new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Senior citizens, however, are doing surprisingly well. And, too, the CDC released **another report** today that shows seniors doing much better than younger people at taking their meds – or at least we are not skipping them due to cost.

There was no real progress in the U.S. at meeting the *Healthy People 2020* cancer screening targets for colorectal, breast and cervical cancers, according to data published in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. For 2013, screening for these types of cancers either fell behind previous rates or showed no improvement compared with 2010.



Mammography use remained essentially stable, Pap test use declined, and CRC test use was essentially unchanged. Some subgroups attained or neared 2020 targets. The proportion of women in the highest education and income groups who were screened for breast cancer exceeded the target; the percentage of privately insured women screened was near the target value.

The proportion of persons aged 65–75 years who were screened for CRC also was near the target value.

Those furthest below targets were generally those without insurance or a usual source of care. For these groups, screening use was 42–53 percentage points below breast and CRC screening targets, and approximately 30 percentage points below the cervical cancer screening target...**Read More**

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

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

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Petition Subject: House Concurrent Resolution 37 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 12 to get power doors installed in Post Offices and other federal buildings.

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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

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