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# RI ARA

*Affiliated with the Rhode Island AFL-CIO  
“Fighting for the future of our members,  
NOW, more than ever”!!!!*



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## November 30, 2015 E-Newsletter

### Refugee Crisis Demands American Leadership



From John A. Pernorio, President, RI ARA. After the House passed a bill, the American SAFE Act of 2015, that could limit Syrian refugees, I received inquires as to why Congressman Jim Langevin, (D) RI, voted for it. I in turn reached out to the Alliance for Retired Americans for our position on this issue.

After receiving the statement below from the AFL-CIO President, Richard Trumka, I contacted District Director, Seth Klaiman in Congressman Langevin’s office for a statement as to why he voted for this legislation.

Listed below are the two statements, one from Mr. Trumka, and one from Congressman Langevin.

#### *Statement by AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka on the world refugee crisis and proposed restrictions on the U.S. refugee resettlement system:*

The world is experiencing the largest refugee crisis since World War II and global humanitarian leadership is needed now more than ever. It is deeply troubling that certain lawmakers have chosen to turn their backs on people in need. We must not let the emotion and tragedy of recent events overshadow the fact that refugee resettlement saves lives and strengthens communities.

As a labor movement, we represent tens of thousands of refugee members, as well as the front line service providers who ensure that refugees are properly screened and have their basic human needs addressed. We urge unwavering commitment to provide support to those fleeing oppression and violence to build a better life among us. We will continue to call upon our government to live up to its obligation to meet the needs of refugee families, whether they be from Syria or right here in our own hemisphere.

I join working families across the United States in sending our thoughts and prayers to the people of Paris, Beirut, and all communities affected by the brutality of ISIS and global terror. At the same time, we stand in solidarity with all those who face violent upheaval around the world and pledge to resist the xenophobic rhetoric of lawmakers who seek to prey on our fears to promote isolationist responses.



#### **Statement from Rhode Island Congressman, James Langevin** **ISSUES: ARMED SERVICES, IMMIGRATION, VOTE**



Congressman Jim Langevin (D-RI), a senior member of the House Armed Services and Homeland Security Committees, released the following statement in response to House passage, by a vote of 289 to 137, of H.R. 4038, the American SAFE Act of 2015:

“The safety and security of my constituents and all Americans is my first priority, and the American people should feel completely confident that we, as a Congress and as a nation, are doing everything in our power to protect our people and our freedom from the threat of terrorism and all those who seek to do us harm. However, I do not believe that protecting our national security precludes us from showing compassion to the refugees fleeing unspeakable violence and oppression in Syria, Iraq and other conflict zones. I know that we can both protect the American people and stay true to the values of

the United States, a nation of immigrants that has been a beacon of hope for those who seek freedom, opportunity and tolerance, as well as protection from persecution.

“I voted today in favor of additional safeguards that will ensure the highest level of security screening for those who wish to enter this country and live by the American principles of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Existing refugee screening standards are already rigorous and include biometric record checks and extensive interviews with specially-trained DHS officers, with preference given to the most vulnerable refugees. The process, which typically takes 18 to 24 months, is designed with a litany of checks and balances by an inter-agency team that includes the State Department, the Department of Defense, the Department of Homeland Security and the National Counterterrorism Center. Today’s legislation would additionally require the FBI, Homeland Security Department and Director of National Intelligence to certify to Congress that any refugee from Syria or Iraq does not pose a threat to the United States. I believe these requirements will provide a reasonable new layer of assurance to our protocols, and I will do whatever I can to ensure that the resources are available to carry them out in a way which does not close or delay the resettlement process for those refugees who meet our criteria.

“The Statue of Liberty, a symbol of American independence, reminds us of our roots. ‘Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.’ We cannot forget those powerful words or what they mean to us, to our forefathers and to the world. We cannot let fear, hate or prejudice destroy our way of life. This great nation, a melting pot from its infancy, will continue to welcome all those who flee persecution and seek freedom. With our friends and allies around the world, we stand united against terrorism.”

**[Click Here](#)** to hear Jim with Bob Plain, RI Future.org , where you can actually listen to what he had to say about the bill.

## Social Security offers tools to help seniors have a better retirement

You should open a 'my Social Security' online account – do it here

By Tucker Sutherland, editor



Earlier this month the Retirement Security Project at the Brookings Institution hosted an event with the Social Security Administration and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau that focused on retirement planning. This event highlights what we too often forget – how important Social Security is in our lives and the helpful tools the agency has developed to help senior citizens have a more successful retirement.

Approximately 168 million workers invest toward Social Security coverage through taxes on their earnings. Almost 60 million people receive monthly Social Security benefits. Around two-thirds, or 40 million of these beneficiaries, are retired workers or their dependents. Many workers paying into Social Security, unfortunately, know little about how the system works, or what they need to do on their own to be ready for retirement.

“Because we’re living longer, healthier lives, we can expect to spend more time in retirement than our parents and grandparents did,” said Carolyn W. Colving, Acting Commissioner of Social Security, at the event.

“Creating a sound retirement plan is vitally important. Social Security provides secure online services for our customers—including the my Social Security suite of services, the Retirement Estimator, and the online retirement application.”

To provide our Senior Journal readers more information about retirement planning tools available through my Social Security and to help them create an account, we are providing key links that can also be found at [www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount) ... **Read More** Watch the Video: **my Social Security – Creating Your Account**

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### Social Security Providence Office Notice

The Providence Social Security office is relocating to **1 Empire Street, Providence, RI**. The new office will be open on December 21, 2015. Beginning on November 30, 2015, the office located at 380 Westminster Street will provide limited walk in service. During this relocation process, all telephone services will be available by calling (877) 402-0808 or visit **www.socialsecurity.gov**

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### AMA Announces New Policy to Make Prescription Drugs More Affordable

The American Medical Association last week called for a ban on direct-to-consumer ads for prescription drugs and implantable medical devices, saying they contribute to rising costs and patients' demands for inappropriate treatment. Delegates at the powerful group's meeting in Atlanta voted to include it in the AMA's lobbying effort to make prescription drugs more affordable.



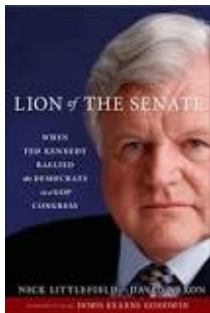
An AMA spokesperson later cited the negative impact of commercials and marketing on escalating drug prices. According to an AMA news release, ad dollars spent by drug makers have risen to \$4.5 billion in the last two years, a 30% increase. Other data show prices on prescription drugs have climbed nearly 5% this year.

The AMA's next steps will include convening a physician task force; launching an advocacy campaign to promote prescription drug affordability by demanding choice and competition in the pharmaceutical industry; and seeking greater transparency in prescription drug prices and costs.

“It's good to see that doctors are joining our fight for lower prescription drug prices,” said Alliance President Robert Roach, Jr. “The public does not benefit when inappropriate pressure for more expensive drugs raises costs for all Americans, disproportionately affecting seniors. These types of ads are driving that demand to unwarranted extremes.”

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### Critics Praise New Ted Kennedy Book for its Insiders' View of an Icon



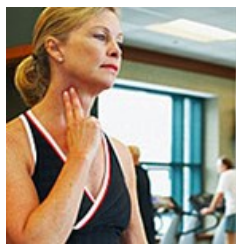
A new book about Sen. Ted Kennedy has just been published, detailing the years in the 1990's when Sen. Kennedy fought to preserve the Democrats' mission in the face of Newt Gingrich's Contract with America. Despite a new Republican majority in both the U.S. House and Senate during that period, Kennedy managed to rally demoralized Democrats by working across the aisle.

Nick Littlefield and David Nexon, two top domestic policy advisors to Sen. Kennedy, are the authors of *The Lion of the Senate: When Ted Kennedy Rallied the Democrats in a GOP Congress*. The book contains anecdotes of Kennedy's meetings with President Clinton, Congressional colleagues, and other key players at the time, going on to detail his role later in the passage of Obamacare while battling brain cancer. It is available for purchase now.

**[Click here if you are interested in purchasing this book.](#)**

## High resting heart rate linked to increased death risk

**Resting heart rate over 80 beats/min meant 45% higher risk of death than 60-80 beats/min**



The average resting heart rate for senior citizens and other adults is 60 to 100 beats per minute, according to the National Institute of Health. A large new study says a higher resting heart rate is associated with an increased risk of death from all causes in the general population.

This is true even in people without the usual risk factors for heart disease, according to this new research published in *CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal)*.

Your resting heart rate is the number of times your heart beats per minute while it's at rest. You can check it in the morning after you've had a good night's sleep and before you get out of bed.

"Generally, a lower heart rate at rest implies more efficient heart function and better cardiovascular fitness," according to the Mayo Clinic. "For example, a well-trained athlete might have a normal resting heart rate closer to 40 beats a minute."

The existing evidence for resting heart rate and risk of death and risk of death from heart disease has been inconsistent, according to the researchers.

"The association of resting heart rate with risk of all-cause and cardiovascular mortality is independent of traditional risk factors of cardiovascular disease, suggesting that resting heart rate is a predictor of mortality in the general population," writes Dr. Dongfeng Zhang, Medical College of Qingdao University, Shandong, China, with coauthors....[Read More](#)

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## Another study proves exercise means better memory for senior citizens

**Many studies find fitness equals better mental ability – this one links it mostly to long-term memory**

*By Tucker Sutherland, editor, SeniorJournal.com*

A new study released today declares that older adults who take more steps than most by walking or jogging performed better on memory tasks. Really, how could this be news? It is just another way of looking at physical fitness and how it enhances memory and cognitive ability. But, this one does find a new twist.

As the editor of SeniorJournal.com for 16 years I have reported on dozens of studies that have come up with the same result – physical fitness, which can be obtained in many ways, helps people stay mentally fit as they age.

I'm not complaining but I am declaring this is an established reality – exercise equals better mental performance as people age.

This research started with the question, "Could staying physically active improve quality of life by delaying cognitive decline and prolonging an independent lifestyle?"

"Absolutely," is the answer I could have provided before their study. It has been proven in dozens of studies – maybe hundreds - that primarily have varied only by the technique used to gain the physical fitness – running, walking, swimming, weight-lifting, dancing, hula hoop, etc.

The differences in this study is it looked at groups of both young and old adults. Which leads them to look at long-term versus short-term memory.

The report appears online in the *Journal of the International Neuropsychological Society*.

The study included 29 young adults (ages 18-31) and 31 older adults (ages 55-82) who wore a small device called an ActiGraph, which recorded information including how many steps each took, how vigorous the steps were and how much time it involved. These are used in many, many studies of physical exercise....[Read More](#)



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## 11 Hilariously Honest Tweets About Aging

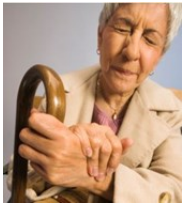
**Funny, but true.**



Not everyone welcomes middle age, but if you have a sense of humor about it, growing older can be pretty darn comical. To make light of aging, we've rounded up the very best -- and funniest -- Tweets from our midlife friends on Twitter. Happy reading!....[Read More](#)

## Deaths from heart disease declining among rheumatoid arthritis patients

### Mayo clinic presents arthritis research on rheumatoid, gout and opioid use



Rheumatoid arthritis patients, most often senior citizens, are twice as likely as the average person to develop heart disease, but a new study shows that efforts to prevent heart problems and diagnose and treat heart disease early may be paying off.

Despite the heightened danger, deaths from cardiovascular disease among people with rheumatoid arthritis are declining, the research found. The study was among Mayo Clinic research presented at the American College of Rheumatology's annual meeting earlier in November.

In the study on rheumatoid arthritis and heart disease, researchers looked at heart disease deaths within 10 years of rheumatoid arthritis diagnosis among two groups of people:

- ◆ 315 patients diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis from 2000 to 2007 and
- ◆ 498 patients diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis in the 1980s and 1990s.

They also looked at heart disease deaths among 813 people without the rheumatic disease. Roughly two-thirds of patients studied were senior women, and the average age was 60.

They found a significantly lower rate of deaths from heart disease in the more recently diagnosed rheumatoid arthritis patients than in those diagnosed earlier: 2.8 percent and 7.9 percent, respectively.

The study also analyzed deaths among rheumatoid arthritis patients from a particular type of cardiovascular disease - coronary artery disease - and found those too declined in the 10 years after the patients studied were diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis.

Among the 2000-07 diagnosis group, 1.2 percent died of coronary artery disease, paralleling the general population, compared with 4.7 percent of those diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis in the 1990s...[Read More](#)

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## Advice for aging boomers: Let your pet carry some of the load

### Teach your dog or cat a few tricks, and your golden years will be better for it.

The movement to improve care for older pets has been going on for some time. But the idea of training pets to help out aging baby boomers is relatively new.

Between 1946 and 1964, 76.4 million baby boomers were born. By this time next year, about a third of them will be between 65 and 70. Millennials will outnumber their predecessors, but boomers were the generation that made cats and dogs part of the family.

Gayle Krigel of Kansas City, Missouri, just turned 65 and doesn't need help now, but she's training her dogs so that when the time comes, they'll be ready. She has two rescues, a very intelligent husky mix named Shammy and a slightly less brilliant St. Bernard mix named Mousse.

After Shammy learns how to fetch the newspaper from the yard during the winter, the dog will start learning to find the remote, which is always lost. And then, because they live in a three-story house, Shammy will learn some "upstairs, downstairs, fetch" commands...[Read More](#)



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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.973 & S.1651**

ADD  
YOUR  
NAME

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