### Retiree Issue

#### Expand and Protect Social Security
Increase the average monthly benefits for seniors, strengthen the Social Security Trust Fund by lifting the Social Security payroll tax cap, making millionaires and billionaires pay their fair share.

*Supports (Hillary Clinton)*

*Opposes (Donald Trump)*


#### Defend Health Care for Seniors
Allow seniors to continue to receive free, annual wellness checks, lifesaving cancer screenings and other preventive treatments through Medicare.

*Supports (Hillary Clinton)*

*Opposes (Donald Trump)*


#### Lower Prescription Drug Costs
Close the large doughnut hole in prescription drug coverage costing seniors billions and cap what insurers can charge consumers in out-of-pocket costs.

*Supports (Hillary Clinton)*

*Opposes (Donald Trump)*

*(Forbes, August 12, 2015: http://ow.ly/HZc303CnVD)*

Source: Alliance for Retired Americans
From the Director’s Desk

Why Not Trump?

In this upcoming election, we are not just choosing our next president. We are choosing a direction for our country. Do we want to continue on the path of prosperity or do we want to return to the stale and divisive policies that led us into the great recession.

Anyone who thinks a guy who has spent 70 years on this earth not giving a damn about anyone other than himself is going to be a champion for the working class is sadly mistaken. All you have to do is look at Trump’s business dealings to see what kind of greedy, manipulative, self-serving egomaniac he really is. He already is on record saying “workers make too much money” and that he “supports right to work” legislation. He claims he’s going to bring manufacturing back to the U.S., but he has all of his clothing and other paraphernalia manufactured overseas. If you look at the products he purchases for his hotels and other businesses, you would be hard pressed to find anything he buys made in America.

The man is an immature bully who throws fits when he doesn’t get his own way. He thinks he is “smarter” than our military leaders and holds Russia’s Putin out as a role model, while he demeans our own president.

I apologize for the rant. However, I have never been more disgusted with our political process as I am today. It’s so very hard for me to believe that any party could nominate anyone so unprepared to be president as this guy!

Jim Centner, SOAR Director

Hispanic Heritage Month

Social Security joins you and your family in celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month, which runs from September 15 to October 15. The most important things to you are your family and maintaining the feeling of individuality through your language. Social Security provides a website — www.segurosocial.gov — with a variety of publications and services in Spanish that are important to you and your family.

Source: Social Security Matters

Morning in America Delivered by Democrats

Nine years after the Great Recession began during the tax- and regulation-slashing Bush administration, some startlingly good economic news arrived from Washington, D.C., last week. The incomes of typical Americans rose in 2015 by 5.2 percent, the first significant boost to middle-class pay since the end of the Great Recession, and the largest, in percentage terms, ever recorded by the Census Bureau. In addition, the poverty rate fell 1.2 percentage points, the steepest decline since 1968. Also smaller were the numbers of Americans without health insurance and suffering food insecurity.

Steelworkers Ratify Agreement with Republic Steel

The United Steelworkers (USW) today said that its members have ratified a new, three year contract with Republic Steel that will set the terms and conditions of employment for about 1,000 hourly production, maintenance, office and technical workers at the companies five U.S. locations through its Aug. 16, 2019, expiration. USW International President Leo W. Gerard commended workers in Lorain, Canton and Massillon, Ohio; Lackawanna, N.Y.; and Gary, Ind. for their unity and dedication.
Billy’s Banter - Be An Informed Voter

This being the last opportunity prior to the election that I can write to you, I thought it might be valuable to give you something to ponder. There is one budget proposal submitted that sounds good and could be supported by retirees. Language like “cutting waste” or “getting the Government out of your life” on so called entitlement issues has a hidden agenda. Reading deeper into these slogans you will find the true meaning; privatizing or eliminating Social Security and Medicare.

As more people enter retirement age, the Republican budget proposes to reduce funding for administering area Social Security offices. As a result, we will not be served as well and will start to believe the baloney that it could be better handled in the private sector. Presently, the Social Security administrative costs are 1 percent. Try to name another company or organization that has administrative costs at 1 percent of their budget.

If this budget is implemented, it will have a direct impact on retirees, whose numbers are growing daily; including those in Pennsylvania. In order to implement these budget cuts, five Social Security administrative offices in Pennsylvania would be closed, along with 15 more offices in other states. Where will these retirees go when they need information on their benefits, especially in Pennsylvania?

We cannot allow SOAR members to vote against their own best interests without at least letting them know what the impact of their vote will be on their life. This can only happen if we choose to remain silent or not be involved. We cannot sit back as an organization and we will not.

Please keep up on the issues and inform our members; after that, the decision is theirs, but at the least we can feel good about what we have done; and remember to vote on election day and get involved.

Bill Pienta, SOAR President

Community Services

The back of the SOAR membership card states the three fold purpose of SOAR. The very first purpose is “To better the communities in which you live.” The ways that our chapters fulfill this purpose is too numerous to mention here, but you all are to be commended for your work in that regard.

Gasoline Pipeline Leaks 250,000 Gallons, Causing States Of Emergency In AL and GA District 9

Gasoline prices on the East Coast are expected to spike.

A pipeline leak of at least 250,000 gallons of gasoline in a rural Alabama county is expected to affect fuel prices in the coming days across multiple southern states and the East Coast. The leak already prompted two states of emergency Thursday stemming from fuel shortage concerns. The oil leak was first discovered a week ago in rural Shelby County just southeast of Birmingham, Alabama.
The McNeil Report
Some Punography

I tried to catch some Fog. I mist.
When chemists die, they barium.
Jokes about German sausage are the wurst.
A soldier who survived mustard gas and pepper spray is now a seasoned veteran.
I know a guy who’s addicted to brake fluid. He says he can stop anytime.
How does Moses make his tea? Hebrews it.
I stayed up all night to see where the sun went. Than it dawned on me.
This girl said she recognized me from the vegetarian club, but I’d never met herbivore.
I’m reading a book about anti-gravity. I can’t put it down.
I did a theatrical performance about puns. It was a play on words.
They told me I had type A blood, but it was a Type O.

• District and Chapter articles and photos should be emailed to the SOAR office at the address at the left.

• Please note: Nominations for SOAR Chapter officers are to be conducted at the monthly chapter meeting in October and once again in November followed by elections.

Elaine Sez...

I am a Seenager. (Senior teenager). I have everything that I wanted as a teenager, only 60 years later. I don’t have to go to school or work. I get an allowance every month. I have my own place. I don’t have a curfew. I have a driver’s license and my own car. My friends are not scared of getting pregnant. And I don’t have acne. Life is great!

Old Charlie Sez...

Don’t forget to get your Flu shot
Battle to Stop TPP Must Continue After the Election

by Robert Roach, Jr.

Republican congressional leaders are making plans to jam the massive Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal through Congress as soon as the elections are over.

The TPP will lead to significant job losses and higher prescription drug prices. The American public – Democrats and Republicans – opposes the TPP. But GOP leaders are committed to helping Wall Street CEOs and multi-national corporations by passing the TPP during the unaccountable lame duck session of Congress in November and December. They’re hoping that no one is paying attention.

Alliance for Retired Americans members joined the AFL-CIO and other allies in a “Day of Action” on Wednesday, September 14; aimed at inundating lawmakers with calls to oppose a lame-duck vote.

We told our Representatives clearly, “NO TPP IN THE LAME-DUCK SESSION.”

With over 90 groups participating, we were able to generate over 37,000 calls in the national call-in day effort. That matches the largest call-in day effort from the Fast Track fight.

Together with our allies, almost 12 million emails were sent out.

Our social media efforts reached over 1.6 million people.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and House Speaker Paul Ryan have said that they do not believe the 12-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement should receive a vote in the lame-duck session.

We, the opponents of TPP remain unconvinced that they will say that after the elections are over.

We can’t let them get away with their plan. We must continue our efforts as we head into the lame-duck fight.

Robert Roach, Jr. is president of the Alliance for Retired Americans. He was previously General Secretary-Treasurer of the IAMAW. For more information, visit www.retiredamericans.org.

Supreme Cover-Up: How The Wisconsin Justice System Failed In The Walker John Doe District 2

Recent elections have turned the Wisconsin Supreme Court from one of the nations most respected state tribunals into a disgraceful mess, wrote noted author on the courts Lincoln Caplan in 2015. The dysfunction is on full display in the documents revealed by the Guardian this week in its expose on the John Doe investigation into potentially illegal coordination between Scott Walker and dark money groups that were supposed to operate independently of his campaign.
Report From The Alliance for American Manufacturing (AAM)

By the time the next issue of the SOAR Chapter Connection Newsletter is published, Americans will have elected a new President of the United States to carry on the fight of unfair trade deals and declining American manufacturing.

It’s been many years since international trade and manufacturing have been such major issues during a presidential election campaign. The candidates pay the usual lip service to groups of hard-working Americans, and, after the election, the so-called protections for our workforce find their way to the back burner of pressing government issues.

But things could be different in 2017. The American public has caught on to why its wages remain stagnant and well-paying, benefit-friendly manufacturing jobs continue to decline. Even more importantly, the public has conveyed to our elected officials in Washington that something must be done and it must be done now.

Numerous “free” trade agreements have finally proven the point that there is nothing “free” about these agreements at all. These agreements have turned out to be “unfair” agreements that cause job loss and pay cuts to American manufacturing workers. Approximately 15,000 USW jobs were lost in the past year because of trade cheating from China.

Other countries are getting in on the money-stealing action by ignoring the agreed upon trade rules or by serving as a third-party country to circumvent the high tariffs levied on repeat offenders such as China.

America is not opposed to trade. We are opposed to “unfair” trade. All we want is a level playing field.

Our elected leaders in Washington should know by now that American workers will be watching more closely than ever when trade agreement deals are sealed. If the deal is fair, American workers can outperform any country in the world, and prosperity will return.

Jeff Bonior, AAM staff writer, Alliance for American Manufacturing

Happy Birthday Social Security

For 81 years, Social Security has been the social insurance system of the United States. It is so wildly successful, that for 81 years Wall Street has not stopped trying to get their greedy hands on it. But time and again, you have responded. You have stopped attempts at privatization. You have stopped the benefit cutting “chained CPI,” even when it was favored by members of both parties.

Now, thanks to you, we have changed the national conversation around Social Security away from cuts and toward expansion. This year alone, President Obama and Secretary Clinton both endorsed expansion. And for the first time in history, the Democratic Party included expanding Social Security in its official Party Platform.

When the Wall Street vultures descend with their tired talking points about “entitlement reform,” we need to remind them that Social Security has a $2.8 trillion surplus, can pay out 100 percent of benefits owed for the net 18 years and over 75 percent of benefits owed after that. And all we need to do is ask those of wealth and higher earnings to pay their fair share and we can afford to expand benefits for millions of Americans.

Source: Michael Phelan, Social Security Works
Communications

Most members, when they retire, wish to remain in contact with their union; whether it is to continue to receive information, to take an active role in their union or the community, or maintain, renew, or develop friendships with people they knew while at work.

There are essentially two aspects to communication: the need of the communicator to get their message out and the need of the member to receive meaningful and timely communication.

A key component of any organization is communicating with its membership. It used to be that, for unions, membership meetings were the go-to method for interacting with the membership. In many ways, this is still a vital arrow in our communication quiver. Nothing quite replaces the value of a robust discussion at a union meeting.

As the years progressed, direct membership mailings, newsletters, and telephone calls supplemented union meetings. In the mid-1990s, the internet and social media were rapidly gaining penetration into our lives, to the point where it is difficult to imagine not having and using them. Probably every organization uses some or all of these tools to communicate with its membership. No single solution satisfies everyone’s needs. As an organization, we must adapt and embrace these other tools at our disposal.

Like many chapters, we have been working to find the best communications balance with our members. We hold regular membership meetings and send out regular newsletters. Both come at a financial cost to the members. In the past year, we have built a Facebook page and launched a website (http://tinyurl.com/soar314). Both of these tools are free and enable timely communication with our members and the broader labour movement.

Allan Haggstrom, President, SOAR Chapter 3-14


Eveleth, Minn. The United Steelworkers (USW) today said that the union has endorsed U.S. Rep. Rick Nolan for re-election to continue fighting for working families in Minnesota's Eighth Congressional District. USW District 11 Director Emil Ramirez credited Nolan for fighting to impose tariffs on unfairly and illegally traded foreign steel imports and supporting area union members during tense negotiations with U.S. Steel, ArcelorMittal and Cliffs Natural Resources.

When Labor Laws Left Farm Workers Behind And Vulnerable To Abuse

Blocking farm workers from a federal right to organize unions would guarantee, a continuance of virtual slavery until the day of revolt, a New York politician warned his colleagues during a hearing in the 1930s. Eighty years later, with Mexicans having largely replaced African Americans in the fields, farm workers lack the federal rights afforded to most laborers even as they face some of the toughest working conditions in the country. In several states, efforts to expand these rights are moving forward.

GMP Approves Merger with USW

(Pittsburgh) -- The Glass, Molders, Pottery, Plastics & Allied Workers International Union (GMPIU) overwhelmingly approved a merger with the United Steelworkers (USW) at its 75th quadrennial convention, both unions announced today. The merger unites two historic international unions with complimentary memberships in the United States and Canada.
When can I join a health or drug plan?

I’m on Medicare and have a Medicare Supplement plan through the company I retired from. It doesn’t cover prescription drugs, so I also have a Medicare Part D Plan to cover these drugs. If you also have a Part D Plan, be aware that your prescription drug needs may have changed and your Part D Plan may have changed as well, along with the list of drugs covered. It’s possible that you could save a lot of money by changing plans.

The Medicare annual open enrollment begins Oct. 15 and runs through Dec. 7. This is the time when you can sign up for a new Medicare drug or health plan, or switch the one you have now. Any new coverage you select will take effect on Jan. 1, 2017.

Open enrollment also applies to Medicare Advantage health plans, which are managed care plans run by private insurers approved by Medicare.

If you have Original (traditional) Medicare and you’re satisfied with it, you don’t need to do anything during open enrollment.

Medicare Advantage health plans or Part D drug plans can make changes each year, including what they cover, how much they charge for monthly premiums and deductibles, and which doctors, hospitals, and pharmacies are in their networks.

Always review the materials your health or drug plan sends you, like the “Evidence of Coverage” and “Annual Notice of Change.” Make sure your plan still meets what you anticipate will be your health needs for next year. If you’re satisfied with your current plan, and your insurer is still offering it in 2017, you don’t need to make any changes.

Here are some ways to help you compare your current coverage with the new plans for 2017. You can:

• After October 1, go to www.medicare.gov to review drug and health plans, including costs, available in your area and enroll in a new plan if you decide to. The plans are rated on a scale of one to five stars. Open enrollment information also is available in Spanish.
• Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) for around-the-clock assistance to find out more about your coverage options. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048. Counseling is available in a variety of languages.
• Review the Medicare & You Handbook which is mailed to the homes of people with Medicare each fall and it’s also online at: https://www.medicare.gov/medicare-and-you/medicare-and-you.html
• Get free counseling from your local State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP). Local SHIP contact information can be found:
  • On the back cover of the Medicare & You handbook or;
  • By calling Medicare (at the 1-800 number above).

People with Medicare who have limited income and resources may qualify for Extra Help to pay for their Part D drug plans. There’s no cost or obligation to apply for Extra Help, and it can save you thousands of dollars each year.

Medicare beneficiaries, family members, or caregivers can apply online at www.socialsecurity.gov/prescriptionhelp or call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 to find out more. TTY users should call 1-800-325-0778. You can always get answers to your Medicare questions by calling 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).

Charlie Averill, SOAR Sec/Treas - Sources were here, there and everywhere
Pay Attention

We have a major election right around the corner for President, Senators and Congress. This election should not be taken lightly and can have a major impact on the future of retirees, workers, our children and grandchildren.

There is a lot of unhappiness regarding some of the candidates and, as a result, some of you may not vote or end up voting against your own best interest. Please pay attention and vote. You may not be happy with the choices but the wrong choice can and will have serious consequences.

On one hand we have a candidate for President that reportedly has engaged in misleading, false or inaccurate statements (fact checkers found major “pants on fire” on most) and unexplained positions and a history of questionable business deals, including questions regarding his charitable fund and is accused of engaging in fraud over Trump University, which was not a university. One of these questionable business deals occurred in Gary, IN. over the Trump Casino, as reported by the Chicago Tribune last week. A professor who teaches at the University of Utah has put forth an argument that Trump if elected, could be subject to impeachment.

Trump has stated that workers make too much money. He is opposed to increasing the minimum wage. He has criticized Social Security, and his party is in favor of increasing the retirement age and eliminating Medicare as we know it. His company has opposed workers organizing. It was reported by the Washington Post that Trump’s Health Insurance Plan could result in 25 million people losing coverage.

A third party candidate or not voting is not an answer, you may not be happy with Hillary Clinton, but the alternative is not in your best interest.

Bill Gibbons, PACE Representative

SOAR International Conference Scheduled

The SOAR International Conference is scheduled for April 2017 in Las Vegas April 7-8, 2017, at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nev. Chapters large enough to send delegates will be notified by mail and must schedule their delegate elections in November of this year.

Some More Punography

- A dyslexic man walks into a bra.
- PMS jokes aren’t funny. Period.
- Why were the Indians here first? They had reservations.
- Class trip to the Coca-Cola factory. I hope there’s no pop quiz.
- Energizer Bunny arrested: Charged with battery.
- I didn’t like my beard at first. Then it grew on me.
- How do you make holy water? Boil the hell out of it!
- What do you call a dinosaur with a extensive vocabulary? A thesaurus.
- When you get a bladder infection, urine trouble.
- What does a clock do when it’s hungry? It goes back four seconds.
- I wondered why the baseball was getting bigger. Then it hit me!
- Broken pencils are pointless.
2017’s Changes to Medicare

On Tuesday, Huffington Post published an article that outlined the changes Medicare will undergo in 2017. Each year small scheduled adjustments are made to Medicare such as deductible costs and premiums.

Based on inflation rates, the Social Security Administration (SSA) determines the cost-of-living adjustment or COLA for Social Security beneficiaries each year. There was no COLA in 2016 and 2017 will likely only see about a 0.2 percent COLA increase.

Without legislative fixes, Medicare Part B will increase costs in 2017 through premium increases, especially for higher earners who aren’t covered by the “hold harmless” clause that protects workers from premium increases. Deductibles are scheduled to increase from $166 to $204 next year, increasing out-of-pocket costs for seniors. Similarly, Medicare Part D premiums will rise to $40 for Americans earning less than $85,000 or couples earning less than $170,000 per year.

“We cannot shift more health care costs onto retirees,” said Joseph Peters, Jr., Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “Increasing premiums and deductibles strains seniors’ retirement funds, and miniscule or non-existent COLA increases make it impossible to combat skyrocketing health care costs. Last year the Alliance was able to fight against a similar increase and we will be pressing congress for a legislative fix once again”.

Medicare Experiences an 1,100 Percent Price Increase for EpiPens

While the Mylan’s EpiPen price-gouging has dominated news cycles and served as another example of pharmaceutical companies’ greed, the impact of the companies actions on seniors has received little attention.

Kaiser Health News reported on Thursday that Medicare experienced a 1,100 percent price increase between 2007 and 2014. In this seven-year period, the number of seniors using EpiPens also jumped from 80,000 to 211,000.

Steep price hikes like Mylan’s significantly impact Medicare spending and seniors’ out-of-pocket costs. Medicare patients’ out-of-pocket spending for EpiPens nearly doubled in this seven-year period. Similarly, Medicare spent approximately $6.4 million on devices for seniors and people with disabilities in 2007. However, by 2014, Medicare spent $75.3 million on these same services.

“An 1,100 percent price increase for patients with Medicare is clearly unacceptable,” said Richard Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance. “Mylan’s price gouging places heavy burdens on both seniors’ and Medicare’s finances. This is yet another example why pharmaceutical companies must be reined in.”

Source: Alliance for Retired Americans Friday Alert of September 23, 2016

1. My goal for 2016 was to lose just 10 pounds. Only 15 to go!
2. Ate salad for dinner! Mostly croutons and tomatoes. Really just one big, round crouton covered with tomato sauce. And cheese. FINE, it was a pizza. I ate a pizza.
4. I just did a week’s worth of cardio after walking into a spider web.
5. I don’t mean to brag but...I finished my 14-day diet in 3 hours and 20 minutes.
6. A recent study has found that women who carry a little extra weight live longer than men who mention it.
7. Kids today don’t know how easy they have it. When I was young, I had to walk 9 feet through shag carpet to change the TV channel.
8. I may not be that funny or athletic or good looking or smart or talented...I forgot where I was going with this.
9. I love being over 50. I learn something new every day.....and forget 5 others.
10. I think I’ll just put an “Out of Order” sticker on my forehead and call it a day.
11. Senility has been a smooth transition for me.