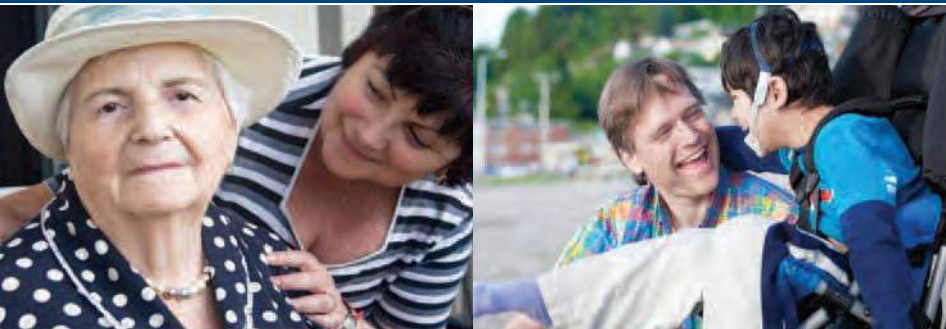


USW@Work

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A Powerful Voice for Workers



“It is hard to believe that there is any purpose to this unprecedented challenge to House rules, other than to cut benefits for Americans, who have worked hard all their lives, paid into Social Security and rely on their Social Security benefits, including Disability Insurance, in order to survive.”

GOP Congress Sets Its Sight at Social Security

On its first day of the new Congress, the Republican dominated House of Representatives fired its first salvo in their attack on Social Security.

The House approved a rule that blocks what has for many decades been a routine renewal of permission to use Social Security payroll taxes to fund disability programs.

The disability trust fund is slated to run out of money next year, making this move particularly ominous. The rule the GOP pushed through will not allow reallocation of the tax income by Congress. That routine reallocation, that both Democrats and Republicans have authorized eleven times before (including four times during the Reagan administration); would permit the disability programs to continue as-is until 2033, giving Congress time to develop a long-term solution.

The rules change, forced through by the Republicans, requires that any reallocation be accompanied by across-the-board Social Security benefit cuts or payroll tax increases.

The National Committee to Preserve Social Security issued a statement explaining that this, in effect, either slashes old-age Social Security benefits or can kill Social Security disability benefits altogether because the only way to implement the GOP mandate would be for Social Security backers to vote for benefit cuts or for Republicans to vote for payroll tax increases—both things being virtually politically impossible.

“It is hard to believe that there is any purpose to this unprecedented challenge to House rules,” said Max Richtman, president of the committee, “other than to cut benefits for

Americans, who have worked hard all their lives, paid into Social Security and rely on their Social Security benefits, including Disability Insurance, in order to survive.”

This is not the first time Republicans have attacked Social Security. In fact, they have been targeting the Social Security system since its inception. They have reserved their harshest attacks against it for its disability benefits component, claiming that it discourages work by lavishing benefits on lazy individuals.

Social Security advocates note that nothing could be further from the truth.

Eligibility for disability benefits requires that an individual must have worked for at least one fourth of his or her adult life and have been employed for at least five of the previous 10 years. Disability must be so severe that an individual cannot earn \$1,000 a month. Even after having met all the strict pre-requirements of eligibility only a quarter of applicants are approved.

**Social Security Payroll
Contributions pay for Disability,
Retirement and Survivors benefits**

**Don't Let the GOP Congress Pit
Retirees vs. People with Disabilities**



BILL PIENTA
SOAR President

It Takes Some Effort

Last month I was hospitalized for a surgical procedure, a total knee replacement. After being released from the hospital, I began my rehab at a local rehabilitation center. While doing my required work, I noticed an individual who had gone through the same procedure at approximately the same time as I did. However, his actions or lack of action made me think about things other than just rehab.

This person refused to put any effort into the rehabilitation process, but complained on a regular basis regarding the lack of progress in improving the strength and flexibility of his knee. It made me think about the similarities regarding the issues we deal with on a daily basis.

We complain about bad trade deals, but do nothing to help our cause. Many of our problems would be resolved if we put in the effort to buy American, stay out of the big box stores and buy locally instead of looking for what we think is the cheapest price.

We complain about the politicians who propose and vote for legislation attacking Social Security, but then stay at home on Election Day.

We are disgusted with tax laws that allow individuals and corporations the ability to avoid paying their fair share in taxes, causing shortfalls in the funding for programs that many people depend on in order to survive. But, we cannot find the time to participate in demonstrations or other actions that focus on these issues.

I do not know how well I will recover from my knee surgery. But, I do know one thing; if I do not make a full recovery it will not be because of lack of effort on my part. I have been doing all that I have been asked to do and a little bit more.

If we all did what we needed to do regarding the issues I mentioned above and other problems facing us, I don't know if we could change their direction. But, I do know we will not impact their direction sitting in our recliners complaining and hoping for things to change.



JIM CENTNER
SOAR Director

The Fight Continues

The election is finally over! I would like to thank you for your hard work and dedication through this long and sometimes difficult process. I know many of you have worked extremely hard this election cycle. The countless meetings you attended, the phone banking and block walks; all played a major role in limiting our losses.

Unfortunately, with the changes that took place on November 4, our work load has significantly increased. Once again a majority of Americans voted against their self-interest. The losses in both the Senate and the House of Representatives have once again put the future of Social Security and Medicare in jeopardy.

Already there is talk of repealing the Affordable Care Act (ACA). This would have a devastating effect on the more than ten million Americans who have gained health care coverage since the law was enacted and the over forty-nine million Americans on Medicare who have benefitted from the enhancements provided by the ACA.

I wish we had time to take a minute to catch our breath and recharge our batteries, but we don't! Our agenda is

full. We must be prepared to vigorously protect Social Security and Medicare. We need to continue our fight for a trade policy that works, and good jobs for our fellow Americans.

Congress must focus on the economy. Creating good family-supporting jobs will resolve many of the issues that angered the electorate. When people work they contribute to the tax base that supports our government and maintains our infrastructure. Payroll contributions fund Social Security and Medicare. That is why we need a manufacturing policy that will create jobs and stop the erosion of our economy.

We need to continue our fight for retirement security and other issues important to working families and retirees. It cannot happen without all of us working as hard on our agenda as we did in this election.

Again, thank you for all that you do! I look forward to working with each and every one of you as we continue our fight to protect and enhance the quality of life of retirees and working families.



SOAR Joins Rally in Houston Call for End to Sherwin Lockout

Houston, Texas—On November 19, 2014, SOAR joined in with more than 150 Sherwin Alumina workers and other allies from across south Texas as they rallied outside the Houston offices of Sherwin's parent company Glencore, calling on the global conglomerate to end a six-week lockout at Sherwin's Gregory, Texas, facility.

Sherwin locked its doors on 450 members of United Steelworkers (USW) Local 235A on October 11, after the workers overwhelmingly rejected a contract offer demanding deep cuts in benefits for workers and retirees.

"Glencore is a highly profitable company, and the USW members at Sherwin have worked hard for years to help make it that way," said USW District 13 Director Ruben Garza. "For the company to lock its doors on those same hard-working employees is not only greedy and irresponsible, it does a disservice to the entire community."

Glencore, a commodities firm based in Switzerland, made \$4.6 billion in net income in 2013 and ranks tenth on the Fortune 500 list of the world's largest companies.

State Sen. Sylvia Garcia, along with workers from other unions including the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, American Federation of Teachers, Communications Workers of America, Laborers' International Union, Seafarers International Union, the Service Employees International Union and the AFL-CIO, also joined in the event.

As the rally took place in Texas, a contingent of USW Local 235A members were meeting with international allies in Brazil, planning a series of global events targeting Glencore, beginning with a rally on Dec. 10 in London to coincide with the company's annual Investor Day.

"Today's events were a huge success in strengthening the solidarity within our local membership and with other unions," said USW District 13 Sub-Director Ben Lilienfeld. "This also sends a signal to Glencore that our fight isn't just about Sherwin Alumina—it's about their abysmal record with workers all over the world."

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USW@Work

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JACK CASPARRIELLO

SOAR Emeritus Executive Board Member



1932-2014

Jack Casparriello, SOAR Emeritus Executive Board Member, passed away December 21, 2014, after a lengthy illness. He was 82.

Jack retired in 1987, after 25 years of service from the United Steelworkers. He served our union members as a Staff Representative and Sub-District Director.

Brother Casparriello started his union career after he was discharged from the Army. He served four years active duty in Korea and two years in the reserves. He worked for Continental Can in Baltimore, Maryland and was a member of Local 4340. While there, he held numerous positions for his local; including grievance committee chair and president.

Jack became involved with SOAR shortly after he retired. He served as treasurer of Chapter 8-1 and represented District 8 on the SOAR Executive Board from 1988 until USW International President Leo W. Gerard appointed him Emeritus member in 2013. SOAR Director Jim Centner stated that, "Jack was a true trade unionist. He felt very strongly that workers and retirees needed a voice in both the workplace and in the political arena. Jack also had a real knack for raising money and was one of the best at collecting PAC (Political Action Committee) dollars. At every meeting you could always locate Jack. He would be the one selling PAC raffle tickets."

District 8 Welcomes New Chapter

On January 6, 2015, SOAR Executive Board Member Bob Adkins, travelled to Lewisport, Ky. to present the charter to the retirees of Local 9443, Chapter 8-6. Bob delivered greetings and best wishes from SOAR International President Bill Pienta and Director Jim Centner. He welcomed the retirees to our organization and discussed the importance of retiree activism.

USW District 8 Director Ernest "Billy" Thompson was unable to attend due to a conflict in his schedule. USW Staff Representative Richard Haas was on hand and congratulated the retirees on forming the chapter and stressed the importance of their activism, as well as their continued participation with their local union.

Chapter President Janice Shelton, Vice President James Johnson and Recording Secretary Dennis Connelly, got right down to business. They reported to the 36 members in attendance about the phone banking and other activities the group worked on in the recent election. Several questions were raised about pension and health insurance problems and it was agreed that a

committee would work with the local union and human resources representative at the plant to try to resolve the issues.

A special thanks goes to Local 9443 members Dale Cooper and Chris Geary for getting this chapter off the ground. Both Dale and Chris participated in the USW District 8 Leadership Program and made forming a SOAR chapter their project. They sent out letters to retirees and arranged for a breakfast at the area community center to introduce the idea to their local's retirees and the rest is history.

Left to right: Dennis Connelly, recording secretary; Dale Cooper, member Local 9443; Richard Haas, USW staff representative; Janice Shelton, president; and James Johnson, vice president.



USW District 8 Establishes the Jack Casparriello Scholarship Fund

Ernest “Billy” Thompson, Director of USW District 8, announced the creation of a scholarship fund for local union leaders. The scholarship honors long-time SOAR activist Jack Casparriello, for his dedication and service to the United Steelworkers. Jack passed away on December 21, 2014, after a lengthy illness.

In establishing the fund Director Thompson stated, “Jack was a true union pioneer. His deep roots in our organization will stand the test of time. From his days as a local union officer, through his servicing career and well into his retirement, Jack always worked to improve the quality of life of our members. His leadership and compassion for others was a true barometer of his character. He leaves a strong legacy of activism that set an example for all of us to follow.”

The Jack Casparriello Scholarship Fund is established to advance the knowledge and skills in labor/management relations and political activism for local union officers and members of District 8. The scholarships financed by the fund shall be awarded to two active local union members on an annual basis to attend the District 8 Summer Institute.

Charlie Averill Recognized for His Lifetime Contribution

On October 22, 2014, SOAR’s Secretary-Treasurer Charlie Averill was honored by USW Local 12775 for years of service to workers and retirees throughout Northern Indiana. The “Service to Labor~Lifetime Achievement Award” was presented by Vern Beck, president of the local on behalf of the officers, grievors and members of the local union that Charlie retired from in 1998.

Charlie held a number of positions in his local, prior to his retirement after 33 years of service. Not one to sit back and not get involved in the struggle of workers and retirees, he soon realized the local needed a SOAR Chapter. He quickly worked to form one for NIPSCO (Northern Indiana Public Service Company) retirees and served as Chapter President for a number of years.

Charlie served as a District 7 SOAR Coordinator for several years and was elected District 7 SOAR Executive Board Member in 2002. In 2005, he was appointed SOAR Secretary-Treasurer by USW International President Leo W. Gerard and was elected to that position the following April. A position he continues to hold today.

His plaque reads in part, “For special recognition of one who has served our organization to improve the quality of life for workers and retirees throughout Northern Indiana. In whatever capacity he has served our Local Union and International Union, he has served with Integrity, Dedication, Loyalty and Honor... Presented with Honor.”



Thousands Rally to Protect Health Care in Ontario

Toronto, Ontario—
More than 20 busloads of people from across Ontario joined thousands more in Toronto to protest against the Ontario Liberal government's aggressive and systematic dismantling of our community hospitals.

Patients, hospital workers, health care professionals and retirees/senior groups, such as SOAR and the Congress of Union Retirees of Canada, joined a giant rally in front of the provincial legislature to send the message that the government's cuts and privatization of public community hospitals must stop.

Speakers talked about being charged extra user fees of hundreds, or in some cases thousands, of dollars at private clinics for cataract surgeries, colonoscopies, endoscopies and other services. These private clinics bill the Ontario Health Insurance Plan and charge extra user fees, violating the Canada Health Act that was designed to prevent direct billing to patients and



Roger Montpetit, 11, rallies the crowd with his speech.

ensure equal access to health care.

Activists called on the government to stop plans to cut diagnostic services and surgeries from local hospitals and contract them out to regional private clinics, that often forces patients to travel out of their hometowns for medical services.

The crowd heard impassioned pleas from residents for the government to stop the planned closure of hospitals in Welland, Port Colborne, Fort Erie, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Penetanguishene. The crowd favourite was 11-year-old Roger Montpetit, who talked about his hometown hospital in Welland that is slated to close. The crowd chanted his name repeatedly as he said, "This is wrong."

Chair of the Niagara Health Coalition, Sue Hotte, described communities' longtime commitment to their local hospitals.

"Our communities fundraised, volunteered and worked to build up our local hospitals for more than a century," said Hotte, whose region has five local hospitals slated for closure. "Now the government is wiping out over 100 years of dedicated work by community members to build our towns and take care of each other. We must stop them before it is too late."



Become a member of CURC

You can join CURC either through your union or as an individual. Please fill out this coupon and send it to:

Congress of Union Retirees of Canada
 2841 Riverside Drive
 Ottawa, ON K1V 8X7

Your name: _____
 Spouse's name (if applicable): _____
 Former/Present union membership: _____
 Street: _____ Apt./Suite: _____
 City: _____ Prov.: _____ Postal Code: _____
 Phone: _____ Email: _____
 New ☒ Renewal ☒

Please enclose a cheque for (choose one):

Individual membership: One year: \$20 ☐ Three years: \$50 ☐
 Individual and spouse: One year: \$30 ☐ Three years: \$80 ☐

Eligibility: Individual union retirees, spouses of union retirees and current union members over 50 years of age. Please don't forget to include your cheque.

Canada Needs a National Dementia Strategy

Doug Macpherson, National Coordinator

Canada is one of the few G8 countries without a national dementia strategy.

The federal Conservative government recently announced a national strategy on dementia but it is little more than a research plan. However, SOAR member and federal legislator Claude Gravelle is pushing forward with a bill to establish a legitimate national strategy.

Gravelle, a New Democratic Party Member of Parliament, has tabled Bill C-356, an Act for a National Dementia Strategy, which calls for a national plan to be developed in conjunction with all stakeholders, including the provinces and territories. Gravelle's bill will be debated and voted on in Parliament in the next few months.



Left to right: Claude Gravelle, MP Nickel Belt; Fred Girling, BC SOAR Coordinator; Peter Julian, and MP Burnaby-New Westminster.

Bill C-356 calls for:

- ▶ Increased funding for research into all aspects of dementia
- ▶ Promoting earlier diagnosis and intervention
- ▶ Strengthening the integration of primary, home and community care
- ▶ Enhanced skills and training of dementia workers
- ▶ Recognizing the needs and improving supports for caregivers

We can help by contacting our local MPs and asking for their support to pass Bill C-356.

There is also an online petition at www.petition.ndp.ca/dementia that supports the bill. This is a non-partisan issue and demands a non-partisan solution.

We need to increase our efforts to convince MPs to support this bill when it comes forward.

Caregiving is a critical issue for people living with dementia.

The Alzheimer's Society of Canada reports that over 747,000 Canadians are living with some form of cognitive impairment, including dementia—that's approximately 15 percent of Canadians 65 and older.

The Alzheimer's Society of Canada says:

- ▶ One in five Canadians aged 45 and older provides some form of care to seniors living with long-term health problems.
- ▶ A quarter of all family caregivers are seniors themselves; a third of them are older than 75.
- ▶ The physical and psychological toll on family caregivers is considerable; up to 75 percent will develop psychological illnesses; 15 to 32 percent experience depression.

Help support those living with dementia by making Bill C-356 a reality.

Eugene Feltham Likes his Beer in Bottles Not Cans



Chapter 6-13 Vice-President Eugene Feltham is one of many SOAR members who adopted a Beer Store outlet to support workers on strike at Crown Holdings in Toronto.

Despite being bullied by security guards and under the threat of police being called, Eugene and his members stood their ground until they had distributed all their leaflets persuading Beer Store customers not to buy their beer in cans made by scabs. Then the group moved on to another Beer Store location.

SOAR members like Eugene joined USW activists across Ontario to support the USW's day of actions in December and January, asking Ontario beer drinkers to purchase beer in bottles rather than cans to help the USW members who have been on the picket line for well over a year.

On Sept. 6, 2013, Crown forced the workers at its Toronto packaging plant to strike by demanding up to 42 percent pay cuts for new hires and other unfair take backs, while the CEO made \$6,000 an hour!

The company proposes that even if the workers agree to huge cuts, they will replace 70 percent of them with the scabs they hired.

Please support these striking members by joining fellow USW activists during upcoming days of action against Crown Holdings. If you are buying Molson, Labatt, Moosehead, Steamwhistle or Creemore beer, buy it in bottles and not cans.

Stay informed at www.bottlesnotcans.ca



Join in the Fight Against Fast Track

This year is becoming a critical year for trade policy. For those in or near retirement, bad trade legislation may not be a top priority. There are, however, plenty of reasons that it should be.

Far too often, trade agreements have served to harm Steelworker jobs by making it easier for companies to outsource and offshore work in the hunt for the lowest wages and weakest safety and environmental standards. While all workers face challenges when faced with a devastating job loss, the decisions that older workers face are particularly daunting. Is an early retirement possible? Is a job search—often for lower wages and fewer benefits—the next step? Will a hard-earned pension still be there? Will negotiated retiree health care be impacted?

MORE CONCERNS FOR RETIREES

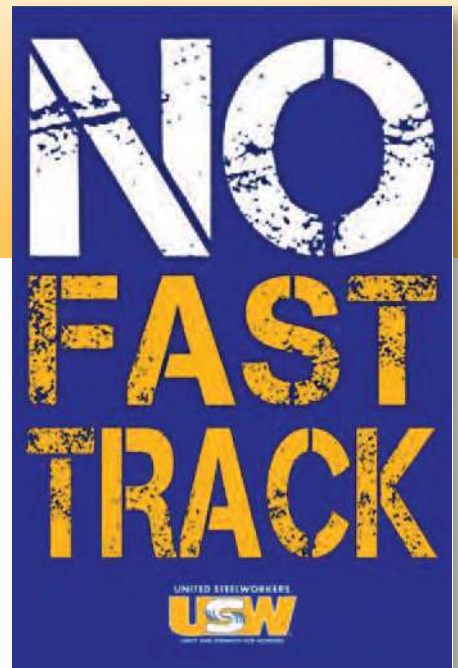
Right now, the U.S. and eleven other nations are engrossed in negotiations for the largest free trade agreement to date, the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP). While this deal presents significant implications for manufacturing and jobs, it will have consequences that reach into the most unsuspecting of places. The Alliance for Retired Americans, AARP and others have noted concerns that the negotiations over prescription drugs favor drug companies over consumers, with implications for higher drug and other health care costs for retirees, patent protections to delay generic drugs, new rights for pharmaceutical companies to challenge government authorities and more.

FAST TRACK

Before the Trans Pacific Partnership would come before Congress, its backers want to secure Fast Track, also known as Trade Promotion Authority. Fast Track rules ensure that massive trade deals like the TPP are rushed through Congress with no amendments and limited debate. Fast Track forces a take-it-or-leave-it decision. NAFTA, CAFTA and the WTO were all “Fast Tracked” through Congress. No trade deal, no matter how bad, has ever been defeated under Fast Track rules.

Clearly, none of this has been good for average Americans.

Steelworker retirees have always been one of our largest assets when we need to engage in preventing legislation that is harmful to working families, and now is no exception. Trade done wrong has severe consequences. This fight is about our retirement security, our families, and our futures. Please call your U.S. Representative and urge opposition to Fast Track, then spread the word!



**WE NEED
YOUR HELP
TO STOP
FAST TRACK**

•

**Call your U.S.
Representative by
dialing toll-free
1-877-879-8951**

•

**Share your name
and where you're
calling from.**

•

**Ask your
Representative to
OPPOSE Fast Track
legislation.**

American Manufacturing Can Win Big in 2015, But it's Up to Congress



It could be a year of opportunity for Congress to support working Americans: an opportunity to create more jobs, fix our infrastructure, and improve America's trade status with the rest of the world. But focusing Washington on what's important instead of the same divisive issues is a tough task.



There's plenty of rhetoric out there about the benefits of manufacturing job creation. Every job in manufacturing, for instance, creates at least four others else-

where in the economy. And President Obama vowed to create 1 million U.S. manufacturing jobs in his second term. But, at last count, only 283,000 can be claimed, meaning to meet that goal almost 30,000 manufacturing jobs must be created every month until he leaves office.

We've gotta get down to business. But it wouldn't be hard for Washington to make good on the president's promise if it just did the following:

Invest in Infrastructure

Data from our latest research shows that passing a long-term transportation bill would create over 2 million jobs, with over 100,000 of them in manufacturing.

Stop Currency Manipulation

Studies suggest that keeping our trading partners from altering their exchange rates to create an artificial trade advantage would create 5.8 million U.S. jobs, with 40 percent of them in manufacturing.

Let's turn the rhetoric into reality. Jobs must be a top priority. Join us to make sure Congress is listening:

www.americanmanufacturing.org/take-action

THE PLAN

More than one in five U.S. bridges is now structurally deficient, one of the reasons we need to rebuild our infrastructure. The good news? Every \$1 billion invested supports 21,671 jobs.

America's transportation infrastructure is falling apart.

Our roads, bridges, railways, waterways, pipelines, and energy grids need serious maintenance in order to maintain a well-functioning economy and U.S. competitiveness in the world.

And a serious, long-term investment would not only address these problems, but create millions of distinctly American jobs while doing so.

But despite mountains of evidence that now is the time to act, U.S. policymakers haven't acted. That must end. It's up to each of us, as citizens, to let our elected officials know that we want the persistent problem of infrastructure underinvestment fixed.

Learn more at: americanmanufacturing.org/research



Washington Wrap

By Ken Kovack
SOAR Legislative Director
Washington, D.C.

Surprised? We shouldn't Be!



When the 114th Congress convened, it didn't take long for the Republican majority to attack the Social Security program. We shouldn't have been surprised; they have been trying to destroy it since its inception almost 75 years ago. The new Congressional majority is focused on reducing benefits for those on disability. While that is bad enough, they also have the entire program in their sights. So beware!

Why, are seniors too well off or don't they care? The record shows that the 2014 election had the lowest turnout in the past 72 years. Seniors failed to vote in record numbers and when they did vote, they voted against their own interest. We all know that it is the Democrats that carry our water on important issues such as Social Security and Medicare. Failing to vote was not an option for us. It is inexcusable; the responsibility to vote remains with the voter. Helping voters understand the national, state and local issues is everyone's job. Knowledge is power but it has to be harnessed and direct action must be taken by showing up at the polls and exercising our right to vote.

We have much at stake. The new majority will flex their new found muscle and come after the programs we all depend on. Not just Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act, prescription

drug coverage, the Older Americans Act, Food Stamps, Elderly Housing and senior transportation are all on the table. The only thing standing in their way is our activism and the President's veto pen. All this is at stake because we sat back and didn't vote or supported the wrong candidates.

Reverend King once stated that, "The arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice." That quote was not stated without recognition of the fact that the historical fights for justice included the jailing of activists, broken bodies and death as if in a war. While the corporate elite hold tidy meetings in their plush headquarters, the workers remained disillusioned. Stagnant wages, wealth disparity (the worst since the great depression) must be challenged. Today we seem to have a new gilded age group of robber baron's capitalizing on their wealth with attacks on tax reform and government regulations to satiate their greed. Yet we did not turn out to vote.

Even with the opposition in Congress, President Obama has a very good record for Democrats to run with. Nearly 11 million workers

returned to jobs, unemployment was reduced and Wall Street investment gains have more than doubled. The auto industry has roared back to life, spearheading our economic recovery. Millions of uninsured and underinsured now have good affordable health care. The two wars, Iraq and Afghanistan, are no longer the huge economic drag that they were and Osama bin Laden is dead. Our deficit has been cut. I could go on, but I think you know where I am going with this. We are moving in the right direction, but again we did not turn out to vote to support our President and his continues efforts to support the working class.

We must hold our elected representatives accountable. They should support policies that better the whole, not the chosen few. The time to reduce income disparity and improve Social Security is now. The odds are not good. Why? The people did not turn out on Election Day.



Better Keep an Eye on This Bunch

By Barbara J. Easterling

Retirees are watching the 114th Congress uneasily—but with hope—to see if it protects seniors or instead tries to cut our earned Social Security and Medicare benefits.

We want to know:

- ▶ Will Congress “voucherize” Medicare and turn it over to private insurance companies?
- ▶ Will Congress pass Medicare legislation that shifts additional health care costs to seniors?
- ▶ Will “Reform to Save” mean cuts to important safety-net programs such as Meals on Wheels?
- ▶ Will Americans continue to pay the highest prescription drug prices in the world?

Seniors certainly wish for the best, but there is reason for concern. Already in 2015, we have seen a rules change by House Republicans that could cut Social Security disability payments by 20 percent. Nearly 11 million Americans could see their Social Security benefits cut if Congress does not take action in the next two years.

And alarmingly, the Alliance for Retired Americans’ most recent Congressional Voting Record shows that several House leaders and key U.S. House committee chairs scored 0 percent on legislation that was important to seniors in 2013. They include Majority Whip Steve Scalise (Louisiana); Budget Committee Chairman Tom Price (Georgia); and Ways and Means Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (Wisconsin).

In the Senate, both Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (Kentucky) and Majority Whip John Cornyn (Texas) scored 0 percent on seniors’ issues in the Alliance’s 2013 Voting Record.

Fortunately, seniors have a lot of clout when we listen to the news and know what the threats entail.

Barbara J. Easterling is president of the Alliance for Retired Americans. She was previously the secretary-treasurer of the Communications Workers of America. For more information, visit www.retiredamericans.org or call 1-800-333-7212.



SOAR Chapter 34-2 Supports Our Troops in Africa

SOAR Chapter 34-2 decided to make Christmas a little bit nicer for the troops serving in Africa fighting the Ebola crisis. They collected 16 gift boxes and shipped them to soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division, with a letter from the chapter wishing them a Merry Christmas. The letter

also included thanks for making the world a safer place, for their sacrifice and service.

Chapter President Jeff Rains and member Shirley Luffman headed up the effort. Chapter members collected and donated items during their November and December meetings.

Shirley took the items home, organized the gifts, packed the boxes and took them to the post office for mailing. The chapter covered the postage.

Shirley has been doing this for our troops since the 1999 Kosovo conflict.

Over the last 15 years, she has sent over 650 boxes to military personnel serving around the globe. Her desire to get involved in this effort started over a conversation with her son, who was serving in Kosovo at the time. He mentioned to her that some soldiers in his unit were not receiving anything from home. She thought that wasn’t right and decided to do something about it.



Shirley Luffman and Chapter President Jeff Rains preparing the boxes for shipment.