

Connection

Scrap The Cap And Any Thought Of A Chained CPI



Starting in 2014, the maximum tax on income for Social Security will be \$117,000 per year. That means nothing more is paid into Social Security exceeding this amount. What that means is that the average working person pays the full 6.2% and that the wealthy Wall Street banker type and CEO's making a million dollars per year are paying less than 1% of their income into Social Security. The higher their income, the less percentage they pay.

To put it another way, a person making a million dollars per year only has to work 15 hours to pay their Social Security tax and the average worker is working all year to pay their Social Security tax. A billionaire pays the same tax in less than a minute.

Notwithstanding the fact that Social Security is financially sound for the next 20 years or more and does not contribute one cent to the Federal deficit, some are proposing to cut benefits by imposing a new cost of living formula called the "Chained CPI."

Any long term concerns about Social Security funding can be substantially addressed by scraping the cap and leaving the CPI (consumer price index) formula alone, which would mean no cuts to Social Security benefits.

Today, when traditional pension plans are under attack and the "three-legged stool" of retirement income consisting of one's pension, Social Security, and savings is becoming unstable, is no time to cut Social Security benefits.

Bill Gibbons, PACE Representative

Alliance Names New Executive Director



Washington, DC – Richard J. Fiesta has been named the Alliance for Retired Americans' new Executive Director, succeeding Edward F. Coyle, who has managed and grown the four million member grassroots advocacy organization since its 2001 founding. The Alliance's Executive Board voted unanimously to appoint Mr. Fiesta, effective December 1, 2013.

Action Request

Please follow up with Bill Gibbon's article above by writing or phoning your U.S. Congressperson and your two U.S. Senators and tell them to improve Social Security rather than cut Social Security benefits. We don't need or want anything to do with the Chained CPI. Thanks.

District 12



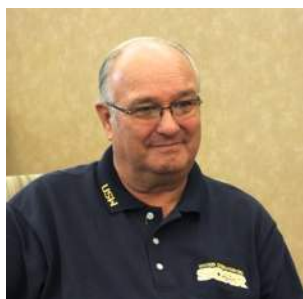
Greetings from District 12. I can report that things in District 12 are going well. Chapter 12-1 in Denver held their monthly meeting and luncheon for October and invited all Steelworker retirees that could be identified in the Denver Metro area who are not SOAR members. Well over 100 people attended. Colorado State Senator Irene Aguilar, an expert on the Affordable Health Care Act, gave a great presentation on the new law. Our new SOAR President Bill Pienta also gave an inspiring talk on the importance of Steelworker retirees joining SOAR and staying active and staying in the fight to protect our Social Security and pensions. Also attending from SOAR were Director Jim Centner, SOAR Vice President (West), AL Becco, Dist. 12 Executive Board member, myself and guests from other Colorado SOAR Chapters. Colorado Alliance for Retired Americans' newly elected president and other Colorado legislators or their representatives also attended. Chapter President David Nefzger did a great on organizing this luncheon.

Joel Buchanan, Co-Board Member, District 12



Billy's Banter

Keeping Health Care Promises



Much has been written and televised lately about a commitment to allow people to keep their health care if they like it. Our politicians in Washington are crying out that a promise made should be kept and that other options are more expensive. I agree to a point.

What I do not understand is why all of a sudden it is a miscarriage of justice to change health care plans for people. This has been happening for years to our retirees and other workers around the country. Many tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of our retirees have received similar letters in the past notifying them of a change or cancellation of their health care by their former employers. The big difference, as I see it, is that we had a written agreement, not a campaign promise, which was broken. Why did they not speak up for us then?

The USW has been in court many times defending our position that we traded raises for benefits and have that understanding in writing. Too many times the courts have ruled we did not understand what we agreed to or that the company did not have to live up to the agreement and not once was there an outcry from Washington that legislation should be passed to allow us to keep what we have.

I agree promises should be kept, but not selective promises. Our representatives should make sure *ALL* promises are kept.

Bill Pienta, SOAR President

A man with glasses and a blue polo shirt with a 'SAB' logo is speaking at a podium. A microphone is in front of him, and a sign with the number '2' is visible on the podium.

Activists from SOAR and the Alliance for Retired Americans were in the fight up to their noses, helping man the phone banks set up by the Cincinnati AFL-CIO, doing the door-to-door walks, helping on mailings and speaking out against the attack on worker's retirement security.

Dayton, Cuyahoga Falls and Middletown also saw SOAR, The Alliance for Retired Americans and organized labor and allies uniting to defeat long entrenched anti-labor and anti-retiree Republican, Tea Party backed incumbents and electing pro-people, progressive candidates. In Ashtabula, another Tea Bagger ballot initiative which would have wiped out county governance was soundly trounced, 68%-32%.

Bruce Bostick, District 1 Coordinator

District 13 - A massive explosion of a 10-inch Chevron natural gas pipeline near a drilling rig in Milford, Texas, led the company to ask law enforcement to evacuate the entire town. Milford, in rural Ellis County, is about halfway between Dallas and Waco. The cause is still unknown. Huge goutts of flame shot into the air at a what appeared to be a drilling rig, according to local affiliate FOX 4. Black smoke was visible for at least 20 miles around.

District 10- The Pennsylvania House failed to approve an amended transportation funding bill that would have raised an additional \$2.4 billion to repair roads, bridges and mass transit systems over five years.

District 3 - VALE Canada Ltd. has been charged with ten offenses under the province's Workplace Safety and Health Act in a mining accident that killed a Thompson miner in 2011.

District 1 - Cooper Union Approves Labor Pact

Unionized Cooper Tire & Rubber Co. workers on Sunday approved a new labor pact that includes pay raises, production guarantees and benefits.

From The Director's Desk

The Senate Finally Fixes the Filibuster



The U.S. Senate finally voted to change the rules and end the practice of filibusters on presidential nominations to the executive branch and to the courts (except the Supreme Court).

The abuse of the filibuster to undermine policies that the minority could not defeat through the normal legislative

process has harmed our democratic institutions and had to be addressed. With this change, the Senate has restored fairness and honor to the nomination and confirmation process for executive and judicial nominations.

Prior to this reform, the Senate was unable to act on issues important to all Americans. The President will be able to fill executive positions critical to creating middle-class jobs, fixing the housing crisis, cleaning our air and water, holding big corporations accountable, and so much more.

The Senate can now move forward and end the crisis in our judiciary system. Too many vacancies exist in our federal courts. They can now confirm judicial appointments ending the empty-bench crisis in our judiciary, filling critical judicial positions and ensuring that justice is no longer delayed and denied.

It is time to stop the partisan bickering in Washington. The Senate must perform in a constructive way that fulfills both their constitutional responsibilities and the needs of the American people. After all, that's what they were elected to do!

Jim Centner, SOAR Director

FILIBUSTERS ON EXECUTIVE NOMINEES

EISENHOWER	0
KENNEDY	0
JOHNSON	0
NIXON	0
FORD	0
CARTER	2
REAGAN	2
BUSH	0
CLINTON	9
BUSH	7
OBAMA	27
OBAMA	45 (PROJECTED)

Source: Cloture votes compiled by People for the American Way

District 12



At the November meeting of the Albany SOAR Chapter 12-7, Central Willamette Credit Union employees were presented with a Certificate of Appreciation for their valuable assistance informing our brothers and sisters of the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act. Over \$31,000,000 has been paid to ATI Wah Chang workers who have developed cancer. Presenting the certificate is Financial Secretary, Wayne Anderson to Michael Campbell, Mary Dail and Amanda Goodwin. President Rudy Hashberger looks on.

Garry Steffy, District 12 SOAR Coordinator

SOAR Chapter Connection

Published every other month
by SOAR

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**The deadline to submit material
for the next issue is February 25**



In preparing for Thanksgiving dinner, Charlie volunteered to help me so I sent him to the store to get two cartons of vanilla ice cream. He came home with chocolate! I sent him to the basement to get me onions and he came up with onion soup mix. Back to the store for pumpkin pie ingredients and he came home with two Snickers, a jar of peanuts, and hot fudge topping! One more task. I sent him to the butcher shop to get a turkey. He came home with a rotisserie chicken. I give up. No more tasks! He grinned.

The McNeil Report

Two young boys were spending the night at their grandparents. At bedtime, the two boys knelt beside their beds to say their prayers when the youngest one began praying at the top of his lungs.

“I PRAY FOR A BICYCLE...I PRAY FOR A NEW NINTENDO...I PRAY FOR A NEW VCR...”

His older brother leaned over and nudged the younger brother and said, “Why are you shouting your prayers? God isn't deaf.” To which the little brother replied, “No, but Gramma is!”



From the Editor

- Don't forget that this newsletter is online at <http://www.usw.org/resources/soar/news?id=0003>
- *Reminder:* SOAR has opened its membership to any retiree who agrees with our policies and principles. Any questions should be directed to the SOAR office at (866) 208-4420.
- Many thanks to those who send in articles and photos. Don't forget that any SOAR member can contribute an article. Please share this newsletter with your chapter members. It's my opinion that if you want someone to read your article, you will keep it as short as you can.
- You don't have to have a computer or typewriter to send us an article. See my mailing address on the left. Tell us what your chapter is doing.

Charlie Averill, Secretary/Treasurer and Editor

Some SOAR Photos

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/usw>

Charlie's blog:

<http://www.charlieaverill.blogspot.com/>

My Youtube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/abbysan>

SOAR Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/USWSOAR/>

Podcasts:

<https://soundcloud.com/charlie-averill>

Emeritus Report - Canada



SOAR in District 6 and organized labor lost two great members. George Bailey from Sault St Marie Chapter 6-07 and Orville Thacker, Chapter 0-80 in Kitchener. They both passed away in October. George was a long time president of his chapter and very active in his community. Orville was also very active in his community. He was past President of the Kitchener, Waterloo and District Labor Council. He was also president of the Ontario Federation of Union Retirees (OFUR) and on the Executive Board of the Congress of Union Retirees of Canada (CURC).

Unemployment is still a huge problem for our young people, especially those who are trying to re-enter the job market. Sears Canada has announced that it is closing a large number of their stores with a number of them in Ontario. This means again a large number of lay-offs thereby increasing our amount of very high unemployment. Heinz is also closing its doors in Leamington. Over 700 workers will lose their jobs. This will have a major effect on the tomato growers in the area.

By the time you read this, our American friends will have celebrated their Thanksgiving Day. We certainly hope that all of you had a very happy day. We all, in both our countries, have a lot to be thankful for.

Dan McNeil, SOAR Emeritus Member

A Busy Year In The West



2013 has been a busy year. I was looking forward to President Obama having an easier term. The Insurance program is going to work. It just takes time to work out the kinks like any other program requires. Before the sequester, we called Senators and Representatives about not touching Social Security and Medicare. Everything keeps working against labor and the middle class.

Colorado had a recall election and a lot of money came into the state. Senator Angela Giron was up for election in 2014 and Senator Wayne Morse was term limited in 2014. They were recalled because they voted for gun legislation. Something needs to be done so this doesn't happen again. District 12 SOAR Board Member, Joel Buchanan and myself worked hard on this. Mail ballots were voted down, which

caused a low turnout.

It has been 100 years since the Ludlow Massacre. The El Pueblo Museum had a display of the children of Ludlow. This year and next year a lot of activities are taking place.

Joel and myself were glad to meet SOAR President Bill Pienta and see SOAR Director Jim Centner at the meeting in Denver. Senator Irene Aguilar was the speaker and does a great job explaining the health care law. She will come to Pueblo on December 13 for the SOAR meeting.

I Hope everyone has a great Holiday Season.

Al Becco, SOAR Vice President (West)

"A lie can travel half way around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes."

Mark Twain

Watch Out For Your Health



Quite often one of the major issues we take for granted, but is such an important attribute to our well being, is our own personal health. Having just turned 71 years of age, one realizes this more each day. I have found out it is so extremely important to develop a schedule to follow regarding a proper diet and exercise fitness program to follow. Believe me, no one has abused his body more than I have over the past years but as you grow older you somehow want to live a little bit longer and enjoy life more. Why? Maybe it is because you are more financially secure in life and all the children are grown up and off on their own and there are just you and your better half left and you want to enjoy more of life's opportunities that now lie ahead of you.

Only good health will give you this opportunity to enjoy life. So if you were like me, don't put it off any longer and commit yourself to a fitness program today. In April 2013 I decided to join a fitness center in my hometown and to exercise and swim each and everyday. I am happy to announce that I have only missed 4 days of swimming since April and have lost 23 pounds over this period of time. The weight loss combined with giving up smoking has given me renewed energy and once again control over my well being. The biggest mountain you have to climb is making that commitment to exercise and watch your diet everyday for the rest of your life. Once you have developed this routine it is just a matter of commitment to follow. If I can do it, anyone can. So, whether it be swimming, walking, jogging or a simple exercise program at home, do yourself a favor and get started today. Live your life to the fullest and enjoy all the additional years you will have through good exercise and diet. Good health to you.

Jim Bickhart, District 4 SOAR Board Member

SOAR Chapter 34-2 Sends Holiday Greetings



At the November meeting of the Granite City SOAR Chapter 34-2, our members brought bags and bags of supplies, snacks and much needed items for our troops currently serving overseas. There were enough items donated to fill 14 boxes that will be sent to Afghanistan. Hopefully, they will arrive in time for Christmas. Each box also contained a personal note from our SOAR members.

Special thanks to SOAR member Shirley Luffman who has been sending gift boxes to our soldiers since the Kosovo conflict and is the mother of an active serviceman. The boxes were the U.S. Postal provided boxes. Mrs Luffmans' son was able to get the addresses of men and women serving in an overseas combat zone that we could ship to. The chapter plans to continue this effort in the future. Thanks to each and every SOAR member and guest who donated

items to be sent in the gift boxes and a special thanks to Shirley for organizing, packing, writing personal notes of thanks to the troops placed in each box and for taking the boxes to the Post Office.

Dennis Barker, Vice President Chapter 34-2

Congress of Union Retirees of Canada (CURC)



Photo left to right: Dan McNeil, Dennis Lafrainiere, “Whipper” Lawson, Rod Bezo, Fred Girling, Ruth McNeil, Julien Dionne, Dennis Carrigan, Virginia McKenzie, Marg Duguay, Reg Duguay, Joyce Cruickshank, Ben Medernach, Lena Sutton, Doug MacPherson.

The Congress of Union Retirees of Canada (CURC) held their 11th Constitutional Convention in Ottawa, our nation's capital October 22-25, 2013.

This was the largest convention of CURC with 116 registered delegates, 40 of whom were women delegates, and 20 guests and observers for a total of 136. The delegates debated and adopted some 76 resolutions

calling upon the federal, provincial and territorial governments to improve the Canada Pension Plan CPP/QPP, Old Age Security (OAS) and an immediate increase in the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) by 15% to raise all seniors out of poverty. The delegates also adopted many resolutions, one calling for the immediate implementation of a National Pharmacare Program, and implementing a Living Wage policy across Canada. The delegates adopted an emergency resolution, calling for an open and transparent public examination of the recently announced tentative agreement of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with the European Community (EU).

Emeritus SOAR Board Member, Dan McNeil, immediate past president of CURC conducted the election of officers which saw Doug MacPherson, SOAR National Coordinator, elected as 2nd vice president for another term.

SOAR was well represented with 17 delegates from British Columbia through the prairies to Ontario. All in all the delegates had an exciting and productive convention and left energized with the work yet to be undertaken.

Missing from the SOAR photo, through no fault of their own are delegates, Una MacPherson and Blake McGrath.

Doug MacPherson, Canadian Coordinator

Your District SOAR Representative Could Use Some Help

Some of the districts in our Steelworkers Union are pretty big, encompassing several states. SOAR District Executive Board Members can't possibly visit and serve the several chapters in a large district by themselves. They need help and they get that help from people who volunteer their time. We have several fairly new district board members who don't know many retirees who live far from where they reside so it's difficult for them to know just who might wish to help. If you are willing to help your district board member in any way, please let that person know. If you don't know how to contact that person, give me a call at 574-772-3332 and I'll do my best to help you. Thanks.

Charlie Averill, SOAR Sec/Treas

Our Walmart Action in District 7



SOAR Chapter 31-9 South Chicago Joins Organization United for Respect at Walmart (OUR Walmart) on the picket line at the Chatham Walmart. It was cold but it was great! Real Fightback heading towards national protests against Walmart's low wages and poor treatment of workers on Black Friday, Nov 29.

Editor's Note: One headline in today's paper reads: "Bentonville, Ark. Wal-Mart CEO stepping down. Wal-Mart Stores Inc. is ushering in a changing of the guard as the world's largest retailer confronts slower growth and challenges to its reputation."

Staying On The Same Page

The way any organization becomes influential and is able to build power is when the members work together as a team. SOAR is no different. It's important for us all to work towards the same end. We can best do that by simply staying focused on the threefold purpose of SOAR as printed on the back of our membership cards and there are numerous ways in which to accomplish these purposes. Let's look at them one at a time.

To Better the communities in which you live (just some examples)

Give of our time, talents and resources to help a food pantry, the USO, being bell ringers for the Salvation Army. Visiting some of our members who are in nursing homes or simply homebound due to disability. Lending support to workers on strike or trying to organize a union.

To Advance the policies of the USW

With this purpose, we can each make sure that our chapters support the legislative candidates that are endorsed by the AFL-CIO. We can make sure that our chapter doesn't share our membership lists with others and we can make sure that our chapter trustees audit the chapter cashbook quarterly according to the chapter bylaws.

To engage in political and legislative action

We all know that even a contract with a company can be changed by laws that are passed or by a judges ruling. We all must "stay on the same page" with our Steelworkers Union in doing whatever we can to make sure that workers and retirees aren't taken advantage of or hurt in these ways. We can demonstrate, write letters, make phone calls and many other ways to achieve our goals.

Let's all try to "Stay on the same page".

Charlie Averill, SOAR Secretary/Treasurer

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a red top, is smiling and holding a book titled "Matrimonio A Distanza Per Un Anni". The book cover is dark with white and red text.

How? Buy American. We spend billions of dollars every holiday season on gifts for our loved ones. So let's put that money to good use and support manufacturing jobs in the process! Why? When we invest in things made in our own communities, we invest in the future of our country. And there are several websites and directories that can help consumers do just that.

For more information, call me at 260-633-1060. Thanks for helping to “Keep it Made in America”
www.americanmanufacturing.org

On October 3, SOAR Chapter 11-4, a SHIP (Senior Health Information Program) Representative presented a Medicare informational program to help our retirees better understand and weave through the tangles of information. Members of SOAR, AFSCM, AFGE, and people of the community attended. Attendees had many questions and sharing of their own problems and successes dealing with the program. SHIP Representatives are volunteers who go through extensive training, so they are eager to share with any group or individual who may need help.

Thank you to SOAR for keeping us educated so we may continue to educate our members.

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