

FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

815 16th Street, NW, Fourth Floor • Washington, DC 20006 • 202.637.5399

www.retiredamericans.org • aracommunications@retiredamericans.org

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President Obama, Mitch Daniels Offer Different Views on Current State of the Union

President **Obama** delivered his State of the Union address on Tuesday night, and the Alliance issued a press release contrasting his ideas with the Republican response offered by Indiana Governor **Mitch Daniels**. “While retirees’ working days may be over, we worry about our children and grandchildren, as well as the future of the industries we helped build here at home. We strongly support the President’s goal of tax fairness; call us ‘old school,’ but we still believe that sacrifices should be made fairly,” said **Edward F. Coyle**, Executive Director of the Alliance.

“In contrast, the Republicans showed their true colors by choosing as their spokesperson a governor who believes he can revive his state’s economy by lowering wages and benefits for working families,” Coyle continued. “Mitch Daniels’ vague rhetoric on Social Security and Medicare glossed over the cold reality that his party – from its presidential candidates to its House Speaker – wants seniors to be at the mercy of the big insurance companies; would let Wall Street profit from a privatized Social Security; and would allow states to slash Medicaid, even though it is the only way 70 percent of Americans can afford long-term and nursing home care.” To read Coyle's full statement, go to <http://bit.ly/xbKBPz>.

House Speaker, Republican Presidential Candidates Still Aim to Privatize Medicare

During an appearance on *Fox News Sunday*, House Speaker **John Boehner** (R-OH) confirmed that Republicans won’t be backing away from plans to privatize the Medicare program this year — despite voters’ rejection of the plan. Read more on the web site www.thinkprogress.org at <http://bit.ly/w5GYsn>. Also this week, House Budget Committee Chairman **Paul Ryan** (R-WI) reiterated his plan to privatize Medicare through vouchers. All the Republican candidates for President have now supported the plan. To see an AFSCME Independent Expenditure ad noting presidential candidate **Mitt Romney's** ties to Medicare fraud, go to <http://youtu.be/hkGrgxw7sSo>. “The ad depicts real Medicare fraud,” said **Ruben Burks**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “But we should also remember that promising seniors vouchers instead of guaranteed benefits is also a form of fraud.”

Florida Alliance Shines Light on Voter Suppression, Romney’s Medicare Policies

On Thursday, Florida Alliance (FLARA) members and their allies called attention to Governor Romney’s appalling attitudes toward Medicare and senior services at a press conference in Fort Myers. Dozens of local seniors voiced their outrage at Romney’s plans for dismantling Medicare and other important programs on which seniors rely.

Today, FLARA members are speaking out in Tampa at a rally against voter suppression. Recent changes in Florida’s election rules will have a dramatic impact on Florida’s seniors; a new law

passed in the Florida legislature cuts early voting from 14 to 7 days before the election and hurts seniors who vote early because they are unable to stand in a line or go to the polls on Election Day.

CLASS Act Letter, New Fact Sheets Available on Alliance Web Site

The Alliance defended the health care reform law's endangered CLASS Act on Tuesday, after the House set up a vote to repeal the long-term health care program next week. The Alliance wrote to House lawmakers urging them to keep the voluntary payroll-deduction program alive. To read the Alliance letter, go to <http://bit.ly/xXtcd0>. Also new on the Alliance web site: *What's at Stake for Social Security, Medicare & Medicaid in 2012* at <http://bit.ly/zq16Q7> and *MYTH BUSTERS: New Health Law & Other Myths* at <http://bit.ly/x1U472>.

State Round-up: Iowa, Nevada, and Indiana

The Iowa Alliance, through their work at caucus meetings statewide, succeeded in getting the preservation of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid into the state Democratic Party platform. The Nevada Alliance has also been successful in submitting Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and jobs resolutions for consideration for inclusion in the Nevada Democratic Party platform.

Despite polls showing strong public opposition to a "Right to Work" for less (RTW) bill being rammed through the Indiana legislature without debate, Republican House lawmakers passed RTW on Thursday. The bill would lower the wages of working Hoosiers and affect the pensions and health benefits of Indiana retirees and their dependents. The Indiana Alliance held a press conference on Monday to raise awareness. "The Iowa, Nevada, Indiana, and Florida chapters have all done a great job recently!" said **Barbara J. Easterling**, President of the Alliance. "I am very proud of their hard work and success."

With a Moving Send-off, Rep. Gabrielle Giffords Resigns from Congress

A year after being severely wounded during a shooting rampage in her Arizona home district, Rep. **Gabrielle Giffords** (D) resigned from Congress on Wednesday. She departed amidst a chorus of cheers, hugs, and tributes. "Rep. Gabrielle Giffords has been a great friend to seniors," said Mr. Coyle. "Many Alliance members in Arizona know the congresswoman personally. We wish her a full recovery and hope to see her back in Congress at a later date!" On September 28, 2010, Rep. Giffords introduced a resolution opposing any increase in the Social Security retirement age, noting that any increase in the age equates to an unfair decrease in benefits.

Coyle Briefs House Democratic Caucus

Mr. Coyle traveled to Cambridge, Maryland on Thursday to make a presentation briefing the House Democratic Caucus on Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid issues.

Regional Meetings Begin on February 29 in Las Vegas

Be sure to register for the Alliance's 2012 Regional Meetings beginning February 29 in Las Vegas, Nevada; March 5 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; April 29 in Orlando, Florida; and May 14 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Workshops will include *Issues for the 2012 Elections*; *Messaging: We Will Not Be Out-Foxed*; and *Best Practices in On-line Organizing*. For more information, or to register on-line, please visit <http://bit.ly/yiqB8n>. Questions? Call Event Coordinator **Joni Jones** at 202/637-5377 or e-mail jjones@retiredamericans.org.