

## Alliance Clips and Retiree News: February 7-8, 2012

### **Health Care**

House and Senate at Impasse on Medicare  
Robert Pear  
February 6, 2012  
New York Times

Negotiators in Congress are at a stalemate in deciding how to prevent cuts to Medicare payments for doctors. There is no issue in paying the doctors necessarily; in fact, Democrats and Republicans would like to give small increases to them. The question is from where the funding will be drawn in order to fill the void. House Republicans would like to scale back Medicare payments while Democrats would like to use funds from the wars winding down in Iraq and Afghanistan to offset the costs.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/07/health/policy/house-and-senate-at-impasse-on-medicare-payments-to-doctors.html?\\_r=2](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/07/health/policy/house-and-senate-at-impasse-on-medicare-payments-to-doctors.html?_r=2)

Appeals Court Rules That Seniors Receiving Social Security Can't Reject Medicare Eligibility  
Associated Press  
February 7, 2012  
Washington Post

On Tuesday, a split decision by a federal court in Washington ruled that seniors who receive Social Security cannot reject their right to Medicare benefits. Five plaintiffs – three retired federal employees and two wealthy businessmen – prefer to pay for private insurance, and their coverage is being scaled back by doctors because of their Medicare eligibility. Judge Brett Kavanaugh says in the majority opinion, that while the court understands their desire for better insurance coverage, it stands in agreement with the Obama administration in view of the law, which says that anyone over 65 and enrolled in social security is automatically entitled to Medicare Part A. This portion of the program covers services including hospital nursing home care, hospice, and home health care.

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/appeals-court-rules-that-seniors-receiving-social-security-cant-reject-medicare-eligibility/2012/02/07/gIQAE54cwQ\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/appeals-court-rules-that-seniors-receiving-social-security-cant-reject-medicare-eligibility/2012/02/07/gIQAE54cwQ_story.html)

### **Politics**

Suzanne Bonamici Sworn In To Congress, Replacing Scandal-Plagued David Wu  
Seung Min Kim  
February 7, 2012  
Politico

Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) was sworn into the House of Representatives on Tuesday, February 7. She replaces former Rep. David Wu, who resigned last summer following controversy while in office. Bonamici is a former state senator, and she defeated Republican Rob Cornilles in a special election on Jan. 31. Her addition brings the total count to 192 Democrats in the House, compared to 242 Republicans.

<http://www.politico.com/blogs/on-congress/2012/02/bonamici-sworn-in-to-congress-replacing-scandalplagued-113804.html>

North Carolina Rep. Sue Myrick to Retire  
Alex Isenstadt  
February 7, 2012  
Politico

Rep. Sue Myrick (D-NC) plans to retire after serving her ninth term in the House of Representatives. Her announcement adds her to a growing list of North Carolina politicians planning to retire or not seeking reelection, including Democratic Reps. Heath Shuler and Brad Miller. Democratic Governor Bev Purdue also plans not to seek reelection this year as well.

<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0212/72575.html>

Rick Santorum vs. Mitt Romney: Former PA Senator Looks to Cast As A Win For Conservatism  
Laurie Kellman  
February 8, 2012  
Huffington Post

Candidate Rick Santorum resurfaced in a big way as a serious contender for the Republican nomination after sweeping the GOP primaries in Minnesota, Missouri, and Colorado Tuesday night. Despite not having the resources available to his campaign unlike Romney, Santorum believes his victories are attributed to the people interested and desiring a purer form of conservatism. To be fair, the Missouri primary held Tuesday is non-binding with no delegates awarded to the winning candidate. Santorum did receive delegate votes toward his total count for his victories in MN and CO.

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/02/08/rick-santorum-mitt-romney-caucuses-results-2012\\_n\\_1262370.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/02/08/rick-santorum-mitt-romney-caucuses-results-2012_n_1262370.html)

Obama leads Romney in Virginia Poll  
Corbett Daly  
February 8, 2012  
CBS News

A Quinnipac University poll shows President Obama with a favorable lead over Mitt Romney in Virginia with a 47% advantage to Romney's 43%. Obama's standing improves 5 percentage points from December when he trailed Romney 44% to 42% respectively. He is still viewed negatively in many approval ratings such as how he handles his position as well as whether or not he deserves a second term.

[http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-503544\\_162-57373125-503544/obama-leads-romney-in-virginia-poll/](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-503544_162-57373125-503544/obama-leads-romney-in-virginia-poll/)

S.C. Sues Feds for Blocked Voter ID Law

Eric Connor

February 7, 2012

USA Today (via The Greenville (S.C.) News)

The state of South Carolina has filed a federal lawsuit against the federal government's decision to block a state voter ID law they have been trying to pass, which would require a valid government ID to vote. In December, a Justice Department ruling blocked the proposed law on the grounds of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and amid concerns that the new provisions could discourage nearly 82,000 registered minority voters. South Carolina is one of 16 states with a volatile history of discriminatory voting practices.

<http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/story/2012-02-07/south-carolina-voter-id/53001466/1>

Former Aide to Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker Pleads Guilty to 2 Misdemeanors

Associated Press

February 7, 2012

The Post Crescent

A staffer working for Gov. Scott Walker pleaded guilty of posting pro-Walker messages while working on county time. Walker was the Milwaukee County executive at the time of the offense; he was not Governor yet. His staffer, Darlene Wink, admitted to posting pro-Walker messages on blogs and websites while working in the county capacity. Her admission preceded her resignation in May 2010. Her sentence will not include jail time.

<http://www.postcrescent.com/article/20120207/APC0101/120207109/Former-Walker-aide-pleads-guilty-2-misdemeanors?odyssey=mod|newswell|text|FRONTPAGE|s>

## **Labor**

3 Groups Cited in Ind. State Fair Stage Collapse

John Tuchy

February 8, 2012

USA Today (via The Indianapolis Star)

Three entities have been cited by an Indiana state agency for their involvement in the deadly stage collapse at the Indiana State Fair last summer. The entities include the Mid-America Sound Corp., the Indiana State Fair Commission, and the International Alliance of Theatrical and State Employees Local 30. According to the Indiana Commissioner of Labor Lori Torres, this report was to determine workplace safety violations. Additional reports by other consultants on the disaster will be released as time progresses.

<http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/story/2012-02-08/indiana-stage-collapse/53006854/1>