

## Alliance Clips and Retiree News December 9, 2011

### **Medicare**

Romney's Attack On Newt: I Pledge To Get Rid Of Medicare Faster

Igor Volsky

Think Progress

December 8, 2011

Romney may hope to out gun Gingrich on Medicare privatization, but both candidates have backed away slightly from Ryan's proposal, but share the same policy objectives: to reduce federal expenditures in Medicare by capping the amount seniors will have to spend for traditional Medicare or private insurance, irrespective of actual health care costs.

<http://thinkprogress.org/health/2011/12/08/384917/romneys-attack-on-newt-i-pledge-to-get-rid-of-medicare-faster/>

Romney's puzzling Medicare move

Sarah Kiff

Washington Post

December 8, 2011

The Romney campaign's aggressive embrace of a plan that drastically overhauls Medicare is a puzzling move. To describe Medicare as a politically fraught campaign issue probably is an understatement. Voters just don't like changing the program, even when Congress wants to expand the program and add new benefits. This morning, Romney surrogates emphasized the candidate's strong support for House Budget Chief Paul Ryan's Medicare reform plan, the one that would replace the traditional entitlement program with one that gave seniors vouchers to purchase private policies. In siding with the Ryan plan, the Romney campaign looks to draw a contrast with former speaker Newt Gingrich, who has criticized the policy as, among other things, "right-wing social engineering." The strategy runs a big risk of alienating seniors.

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/ezra-klein/post/romneys-puzzling-medicare-move/2011/12/08/gIQAzkOzfO\\_blog.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/ezra-klein/post/romneys-puzzling-medicare-move/2011/12/08/gIQAzkOzfO_blog.html)

### **Social Security**

Elder Poverty and a GOP Sucker Punch - NOW Will Democrats Pledge to Defend Social Security?

Richard Eskow

The Hill

December 9, 2011

Republicans are starting to attack Democrats on Social Security -- from the left. Social Security needs protecting, and elected officials need to prove they're committed to defending a popular and successful program. Fortunately, there is a solution. The president and other 'centrist' Democrats need to offer the country a firm pledge that they will not cut Social Security benefits in any way, now or in the future.

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rj-eskow/elder-poverty-and-a-gop-s\\_b\\_1138393.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rj-eskow/elder-poverty-and-a-gop-s_b_1138393.html)

Loaded-Up Payroll Tax-Cut Bills to Collide

Steven Sloan and Richard Rubin

Business Bloomberg

December 9, 2011

U.S. House Speaker John Boehner and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid are poised for a collision next week of their bids to extend or expand a payroll tax cut for workers. Both leaders agree on extending the Social Security payroll tax cut in some manner, addressing expanded unemployment benefits that will lapse at the end of the year, preventing cuts to physician reimbursements by Medicare and approving some spending reductions. Their differences over how to pay for a comprehensive package, along with some of their priorities, present procedural hurdles -- such as the need for 60 votes to avoid a filibuster-- that are tough to clear.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-12-09/loaded-up-payroll-tax-cut-bills-to-collide.html>

## **Labor**

States expand lucrative pensions to more jobs

Thomas Frank

December 8, 2011

USA Today

Special retirement benefits once reserved for police, firefighters and others with dangerous jobs are now being given to tens of thousands of state workers employed as park rangers, foresters, dispatchers, coroners, even highway laborers, museum guards and lifeguards. The trend will add heavily to the \$70 billion that state taxpayers owe state retirement funds each year. Thirty-one states have passed laws since 2000 that expand the range of workers who can retire when they turn 50 or 55 or after working 20 or 25 years, then collect special pensions that will pay some an extra \$1 million or more in retirement.

<http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/story/2011-12-08/state-pensions-workers/51750670/1>

## **Politics**

Why Senior Voters Will Turn Against Newt Gingrich

Eric Pianin

The Fiscal Times

December 8, 2011

Newt Gingrich is enjoying remarkable support from older voters who like his conservative edginess and professorial command of issues. But some scholars say Gingrich's ideas for creating a private parallel universe of retirement and health insurance programs for seniors carries serious risks for the long term health of the Social Security and Medicare trust funds.

<http://www.thefiscaltimes.com/Articles/2011/12/08/Why-Senior-Voters-Will-Turn-Against-Newt-Gingrich.aspx#page1>