

Alliance Press Clips and Retiree News December 6, 2011

Alliance People

Letter: We need to remember Social Security is a promise from our government
Sartell Newsleaders
November 23, 2011
Lewis Neuman Jr., Retired Senior Citizen, Sartell

As a retired industrial laborer, I am worried Congress may cut Social Security as a way of lowering federal spending. All of us currently on Social Security paid for it through every paycheck we ever earned and our employer contributed their fair share.

<http://www.thenewsleaders.com/letter-we-need-to-remember-social-security-is-a-promise-from-our-government>

People that could least afford it may face more hardship
Common Ground Rhode Island
Ed Coyle and John Pernorio
December Issue 2011

The failure of the Super Committee is a good thing for retirees. We spoke up and told them that cuts to Medicare and Social Security were unacceptable. This was not the first time these programs have faced cuts, and it will not be the last. Seniors need to remain vigilant and remind lawmakers that they cannot balance the budget on the backs of the seniors. There is a right and a wrong way to balance this deficit. The right way is to end tax cuts for the wealthy and Wall Street, the wrong way is to cut senior programs like Medicare and Social Security.

To access the full article follow the link: www.ricommongroundnews.com then click “current issue” image in bottom right, click expand, then turn to page 11.

Opinion: No Breaks for Billionaires
Rancho Bernardo Patch
Charlie Williams, chairman of Field Mobilization Committee, Alliance for Retired Americans and former Midwest States Political Director for the Machinists Union
December 5, 2011

Excerpt: History tells of the robber barons of the late 19th and early 20th centuries who also amassed huge wealth much like the billionaires of today. But a bit of sympathy is due the robber barons of old as they actually built job-creating industries like railroads, and factories, from steel manufacturing to chewing gum as recently reported by Jeff Madrick on the NYR Blog. Unlike

the robber barons of old, many of the robber barons today made much of their money through investment gambling while producing very few products. This new investment industry actually promotes closing American factories and shipping our jobs out of the country. Investors then bring their low-wage produced products back to America to sell, driving up profits at the expense of American workers' jobs. Today's robber barons have even invested in schemes that ensure both their success and their failure thereby ensuring they profit if they win or if they lose.

Read whole article at: <http://ranchobernardo.patch.com/articles/black-friday-and-billionaires>

Medicare

A small taste: NH samples Obamacare

Union Leader

Editorial

December 1, 2011

Medicare Advantage customers are losing their doctors due to changes in Medicare Advantage under the Affordable Care Act. Medicare Advantage is a division of Medicare in which the government pays private insurers a set amount per month. It is a market based plan that is supposed to save costs by providing incentives to employers to reduce their costs. As a result of the changes in Medicare Advantage 7,600 seniors in New Hampshire received notices that their coverage was being cancelled. This restructuring is to push seniors back into traditional Medicare.

<http://www.unionleader.com/article/20111201/OPINION01/712019961>

Health care law changing behavior

USA Today

Kelly Kennedy

December 5, 2011

A new provision in the healthcare law puts a 50% discount on prescription drugs that fall into the "doughnut hole." This is the gap in coverage in Medicare Part D. Before healthcare reform seniors would have to buy their prescriptions at full price. Since the reform more than 2.65 million seniors have saved \$1.5 billion on their prescriptions. Seniors are becoming more engaged in their care, Jonathan Blum, director of the Center for Medicare, said citing the hundreds of forums Medicare has conducted about the changes. "The sentiment is that Medicare is trying to keep them healthy and out of the hospital," Blum said.

<http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/story/2011-12-05/Medicare-prescription-drugs-health-care-law/51663580/1?loc=interstitialskip>

Social Security

Obama Payroll Tax Cuts Seen Undermining Social Security Support

Business Week

Brian Faler

December 5, 2011

Obama's plan to cut payroll tax may help the economy, but it may hurt Social Security. If the payroll tax cut is allowed to expire, which it is set to do in January, workers will see their paychecks shrink. Economists estimate that this could negatively impact economic growth by 0.7%. Social Security is supposed to be funded through 12.4% payroll tax that is split evenly between workers and employers. Obama plans to lower the worker tax to 3.1%, saying the difference for Social Security will be made up in general revenue. AARP supports the tax cuts so long as they are temporary, whereas the group Strengthen Social Security opposes the tax cut. It is a question between funding Social Security and allowing economic growth, what do you think?

<http://www.businessweek.com/news/2011-12-05/obama-payroll-tax-cuts-seen-undermining-social-security-support.html>

Labor

Many Workers in Public Sector Retiring Sooner

Monica Davey

The New York Times

December 5, 2011

The number of public sector workers choosing to retire this year is way up in many states. This could be because the nation is getting to the point in time where a number of baby boomer have reached retirement age, or it could be because worker want to get out while they still have their pensions. Due to the deficit the nation and many states are facing public sector workers are facing cuts to their retirement and pensions. In some places the wave of retirements is welcome. Kansas announced last month that it would save \$34.5 million over two years because more than 1,000 workers had agreed to accept cash and health insurance incentives to leave. But what are the costs of all these experienced workers leaving? "We're going to waste a lot of tax dollars with young people attempting things that were tried before. You can get people cheaper, but whether you save money, I don't know," said Karen Gunderson, 56, who retired this year from her information technology job with the state of Wisconsin after 26 years, a few years sooner than she had intended.

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/06/us/more-public-sector-workers-are-retiring-sooner.html?_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=tha2

OECD report cites rising income inequality

The Washington Post

Michael A. Fletcher

December 5, 2011

In a report released by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Monday, income inequalities will continue to rise unless there is aggressive action taken by the government. Internationally the widening income gap has been driven up by skilled workers demanding higher incomes made possible by technological process. Frustrations about this have spilled over into protest on the streets in a number of countries. “The social contract is starting to unravel in many countries,” OECD Secretary General Angel Gurría said in a statement. “This study dispels the assumptions that the benefits of economic growth will automatically trickle down to the disadvantaged and that the greater inequality fosters greater social mobility. Without a comprehensive strategy for inclusive growth, inequality will continue to rise.” The United States, Turkey and Israel have among the largest ratios between the incomes of those at the top and the bottom, roughly 14 to 1. Overall, inequality among working Americans has risen 25 percent since 1980, the report said. In 2008, the average annual income of the top 10 percent of Americans was \$114,000, nearly 15 times higher than that of the bottom 10 percent. The share of income going to the nation’s richest 1 percent more than doubled between 1980 and 2008, rising from 8 percent to 18 percent, the report said. The richest 1 percent of Americans make an average of \$1.3 million in after-tax income, compared with \$17,700 for the bottom 20 percent.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/oecd-report-cites-rising-income-inequality/2011/12/05/gIQAWrwZXO_story.html?hpid=z4