



FRIDAY ALERT

Alliance *for* Retired Americans

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Headlines:

- U.S. House Approves Ryan Budget that Slashes Medicare**
- Sebelius Steps Down as Secretary of Health and Human Services**
- GOP Pursuing New Voter Restrictions in Swing States**
- Ohio Alliance Holds its Convention**
- Fiesta Travels to Mass. and Michigan to Discuss a New Chapter, Attend Convention**
- Alliance's National Convention is April 28 – May 1, 2014 at Bally's Hotel Las Vegas**

Here is your April 11 edition:

U.S. House Approves Ryan Budget that Slashes Medicare

In a nearly party-line vote, the Republican-led House of Representatives voted 219-205 on Thursday to approve a 2015 budget plan unveiled last week by Rep. **Paul Ryan** (R-WI), Chairman of the House Budget Committee. Ryan's plan would make sharp cuts to Medicare, as well as other domestic programs such as Medicaid and food stamps, while lowering taxes for corporations and high income individuals. It would also repeal the Affordable Care Act. All of the House Democrats and twelve Republicans voted against the plan. It offers a vision of Republican budget priorities heading into this year's mid-term elections. For a tally of the vote, go to <http://tinyurl.com/krij3em>.

Ryan's plan would give seniors a coupon to pay for Medicare, cutting benefits and shifting costs to retirees. A voucher would give seniors a fixed amount to purchase a plan, forcing them to cover the difference between the amount of the voucher and the actual cost of the plan. According to the Congressional Budget Office, premiums for traditional Medicare under Ryan's proposal would be 50% higher than current projections by 2020. Yearly increases in voucher amounts are also not expected to keep pace with growth in health care costs, forcing seniors to cover an increasing proportion of health costs over time. Alliance members had sent more than 10,500 letters to their U.S. Representatives just this week urging them not to support Ryan's budget. If you did not yet send a letter and still want to contact Congress, go to <http://tinyurl.com/nkys839>.

"Seniors hope that Thursday's vote shows the public what would happen if the Ryan budget were to be passed by the U.S. Senate: they would pay dearly," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance.

"Ryan's dangerous budget proposal would end the Medicare guarantee and cause seniors' out of pocket health expenses to skyrocket," added **Ruben Burks**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance.

To see the Alliance press release about the House action, go to <http://tinyurl.com/ls9x27p>. For a breakdown of what the Ryan budget would mean for each state, go to <http://tinyurl.com/m93ttam>.

Sebelius Steps Down as Secretary of Health and Human Services

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary **Kathleen Sebelius** is resigning. President Obama will nominate OMB Director **Sylvia Mathews Burwell** to follow her. "We are grateful to Secretary Sebelius for overseeing HHS during such a challenging time for our nation's health care policy, and for all the Alliance events she attended," said Mr. Fiesta.

GOP Pursuing New Voter Restrictions in Swing States

Republican-controlled governments in swing states like Ohio, North Carolina, and Wisconsin are pursuing a variety of new, restrictive voting rules that go even further than recently enacted voter identification laws, according to *The New York Times*. The new rules would limit early voting days, place limits on weekend voting, and make it more difficult to register, vote absentee, or use provisional ballots. In total, nine states have passed measures making it more difficult to vote since the start of 2013. The new restrictions come in the wake of a 2013 Supreme Court decision which struck down central provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The decision allowed a number of mostly Southern states to modify election laws without receiving prior approval from the Justice Department. Read more about the new limits in the *Times* here: <http://tinyurl.com/n4a9572>.

Democrats and opponents of the measures say that the changes are designed to give the GOP an electoral advantage. The groups most affected by the changes are expected to be minorities and low-income urban voters, core Democratic constituencies. Democrats have responded by filing lawsuits in states like North Carolina and Texas in an effort to keep the new rules from taking effect.

"These new restrictions threaten the fundamental right of Americans to make their voices heard at the ballot box," said **Barbara J. Easterling**, President of the Alliance. "They certainly place additional burdens on seniors."

Ohio Alliance Holds its Convention

The Ohio Alliance for Retired American Educational Fund convention took place on Tuesday. A state chapter-record 175 active, engaged retirees were in attendance. They heard a rousing call to action from Ohio AFL-CIO President **Tim Burga**, followed by a release of the first-ever Ohio General Assembly Voting. The convention also addressed Governor **John Kasich's** (R) tax shift and the recent round of voter suppression bills. As the day concluded, there was a brief presentation by **Wynne Antonio**, Retiree Council Coordinator at the North Shore AFL-CIO, about how to set up a speakers bureau.

Fiesta Travels to Mass. and Michigan to Discuss a New Chapter, Attend Convention

Mr. Fiesta traveled to Massachusetts on Monday for discussions about building a future Massachusetts Alliance for Retired Americans chapter.

Fiesta was in Warren, Michigan on Wednesday for the Michigan Alliance's biannual convention. 150 people attended, marking the tremendous growth of the organization. Re-elected to the Michigan Alliance Executive Board were: **Dick Long**, President; **Henry Lykes**, Executive Vice President; **Judy Foster**, 1st Vice President; **Charlie Robinson**, Treasurer; and **Richard McInerney**, Secretary.

Alliance's National Convention is April 28 – May 1, 2014 at Bally's Hotel Las Vegas

It is not too late to register for the Alliance for Retired Americans 2014 National Membership Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada, April 28 through May 1. Speakers include **Linda Chavez-Thompson**, former Executive Vice-President of the AFL-CIO; **Carolyn W. Colvin**, Acting Commissioner of Social Security;

J. David Cox, President of the American Federation of Government Employees; **Lee Saunders**, President of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME); **Liz Shuler**, Alliance Executive Vice President and Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL-CIO; and many others. Workshops are slated to include *Building Coalitions*; *Voter Rights and Voter Protection*; *The Trans Pacific Partnership Exposed*; and more! Additional info is at <http://bit.ly/1hYpj0g>.

For a printable version of this document, go to <http://bit.ly/1esnvMP>.

For the Alliance's Spanish language page, which includes last week's Friday Alert in Spanish, go to www.alianzadejubilados.org