

RETIREE NOTES



Mary Jones, president of sub-chapter 161, and Charles Hogan, president of sub-chapter 60, make calls to state employees.

Hands off my health care!

AFSCME RETIREE SUB-CHAPTERS across the state are joining with the Alliance of Retired Americans in its “Hands Off My Medicare” initiative.

Retirees need to know where their Members of Congress stands on House Speaker Paul Ryan’s plan to gut Medicare. His changes would be devastating to the millions of retired Americans who depend on this federal health insurance program.

Retirees have met with Rep. Rodney Davis in Decatur and Rep. Randy Hultgren in Woodstock, as well as the staff of U.S. Representative Darin LaHood in Peoria and Rep. John Shimkus in Danville.

These meetings shed light on the misleading partisan rhetoric about Medicare, which Republican legislators use to confuse constituents regarding the harmful cuts they intend to impose.

For example, Congressman Rodney Davis said that a “pre-

mium support system” might be necessary to save Medicare—but it’s the same plan as the irresponsible and harmful “voucher system.”

AFSCME and the IARA will continue to work closely together and retirees will be notified of opportunities to get involved in the fight to save Medicare.

Retirees stand ready to help state workers

AFSCME RETIREEES STAND IN solidarity with state employees, who overwhelmingly voted to authorize their Bargaining Committee to call a strike if all other options for a fair contract have been exhausted.

Retirees across the state helped ensure high turnout during the three-week strike authorization vote by organizing get-out-the-vote phone banks.

Retirees like sub-chapter 86 President Don Todd got involved because the fight for a fair state contract will impact them directly and threatens all the gains made over years of

hard work and struggle.

“People need to know what is really going on,” Todd said. “The contract battle does affect us and retirees need to be ready to fight.”

Rauner’s extreme terms would hurt retirees

WHEN THE RAUNER-APPOINTED Illinois Labor Relations Board ruled that contract negotiations between AFSCME and Governor Rauner were at an impasse, Rauner was given a green light to impose his “last, best and final offer” on state employees.

If he does, thousands of retirees will feel the burden too.

Under Rauner’s extreme terms, state retirees that have non-Medicare-eligible dependents would see their dependent premium contributions double if they want to stay on their current health plan.

The state will offer additional managed care and Quality Care health plans from which retirees can choose. But while

these new health plan options will have lower dependent premium costs, they will have significantly higher deductibles, co-pays and out-of-pocket expenses—costs which fall heaviest on retirees.

Rauner’s terms also eliminate Appendix B in the contract, which contains language that guarantees retiree health care coverage.

The Rauner Administration claims the language in Appendix B is already in state law and therefore unnecessary in the contract. But state law can be changed at any time with legislative action, whereas contractual rights are legally enforceable and can’t be changed without further negotiation with the union.

That’s why Rauner wants Appendix B out of the contract, and that’s why retirees are joining with state employees to fight back against his harmful attacks.

Sub-chapter meetings a boost for retirees

RETIREMENT SECURITY IS threatened at both the state and national level. One way to get critical information is to attend your AFSCME retiree sub-chapter meeting.

“We invite speakers to our sub-chapter meetings and they really help explain the issues clearly. I can ask questions and actually get answers,” said Dave Patnaude, member of sub-chapter 76.

AFSCME Chapter 31 retirees currently have 35 sub-chapters located throughout the state. Each sub-chapter meets once a month and discusses current issues affecting retirees.

“At meetings, we can present in-depth information, brainstorm and have a Q & A

that you can’t get in emails,” sub-chapter 93 President Alan Latoza said. “I believe that having engaging retiree discussions has benefits for all.”

To find a meeting place and time near you, visit AFSCME31.org/retirees/meeting-in-my-area.

Social Security under attack

THREATS TO SOCIAL SECURITY have resurfaced with a bill introduced by Sam Johnson, a Republican Congressman from Texas, which would cut most Social Security recipients’ benefits by 27 percent.

Johnson’s plan to “save Social Security” is to cut the program’s benefits instead of raising revenue by applying higher payroll taxes to wealthier citizens. His bill raises the retirement age from 65 to 69, changes the benefit-computation formula, and cuts cost-of-living adjustments.

“Seniors in this country are opposed to any cuts to Social Security because this benefit is vital to so many,” said Barbara Franklin, sub-chapter 88 president and president of the Illinois Alliance of Retired Americans (IARA).

A third of seniors rely on Social Security for 90 percent or more of their income. Two-thirds count on it to supply at least half of their income. The program lifts nearly 20 million Americans out of poverty.

AFSCME is working closely with the IARA to aggressively advocate for the protection of retiree benefit programs.

AFSCME and IARA will continue to act proactively, applying pressure to legislators and informing them of the serious impact of their actions.



Sub-chapter 69 (Rockford)



Sub-chapter 79 (Bloomington)