New York State Alliance for Retired Americans to hold Biennial Election Convention 2018

On Thursday April 19, 2018 at the NYSUT offices (800 Troy Schenectady Road, Latham, New York) from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm the NYS Alliance for Retired Americans will convene its biennial election convention. The Agenda of the convention is:

10:30 - 11:00 am - Registration in the front foyer

11:00 am - 12:30 pm - Morning Session

• Welcome - Paul Pecorale, NYSUT 2nd Vice President
• Introduction of the NYSARA Board of Directors
• Keynote Speaker - Honorable John T. McDonald III - NYS Assembly Member 108th Dist.
• Resolutions on Support for the Elderly in Puerto Rico and Addressing Pharmaceutical Industry Abuses
• Presentation on Death by a thousand Cuts (Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid)

12:30 - 1:00 pm Lunch

1:00 - 3:00 pm - Afternoon Session

• Election of Officers and Board of Directors
• NYSARA Actions from May 2017
• Keynote Speaker - Richard Fiesta, ARA Executive Director
How Medicare Recipients Will Benefit from the New York Health Act Benefits from Single Payer/Medicare of All

NYSARA President Barry A. Kaufmann was on a conference call with the group New York Health Strategies, which included Assemblyman Richard Gottfried (D/75th District), Chairman of the Assembly Health Committee in order to determine and activate methods that may enable the passage of the New York Health bill. This bill would provide a single payer/Medicare for all in New York. The fear by Medicare recipients is that this bill would compromise Medicare is unfounded. In fact this bill seeks to expand Medicare coverage and mitigate costs. Our partners from the Campaign for New York Health also informed us that our joint effort to complete the Health Rights and Access Survey was a success and exceeded their expectations. NYSARA members were responsible for over 1/3 (35%) of the total surveys completed. A significant effort and success.

Today Medicare recipients spend an average of $6,100 -- 22% of their income -- on health care. The New York Health Act will eliminate out-of-pocket costs for all New Yorkers, ending financial worries when seeking health care. New Yorkers will pay less in New York Health premiums than they have been paying to insurance companies and in out-of-pocket expenses, and they will get the health care they need when they need it.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEALTH CARE SERVICE</th>
<th>Medicare</th>
<th>NY Health</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hospital care</td>
<td>Deductibles &amp; Copays</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physician Care</td>
<td>Premium, Deductible, Copays</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prescription Drugs</td>
<td>Premium, Deductible, Coinsurance, Copays</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dental, Hearing, Vision Care</td>
<td>Not Covered</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Long-term Care</td>
<td>Not Covered</td>
<td>Fully integrated within two years of enactment*</td>
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At a rally, in front of Congressman John Katko’s office, on April 6th Bill Spreiter, President of the Central New York Chapter of NYSARA said of the Trump tax cuts "We are very concerned that the Trump tax cuts will blow a hole in the budget, and will be used to justify cuts to Medicaid and Medicare. At first, we project those cuts to be cuts of a thousand cuts. They’ll be done a little bit at a time so people don’t even notice.”

### Paul Ryan Retirement Brings a Sigh of Relief to Millions of Seniors

House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) announced on Wednesday that he will not run for re-election. Democrats rejoiced after he announced his decision, saying his departure is a sure sign that a Democratic wave is going to deliver them the House in November.

In 2012, Ryan unveiled a federal budget blueprint that would have ended Medicare as we know it and slashed Medicaid dramatically. He long sought to privatize Medicare and turn it into a voucher program, which would have dramatically shifted costs to enrollees. The Kaiser Family Foundation calculated that under Ryan’s plan, out-of-pocket medical expenses for the typical 65-year-old in 2022 would come to half his or her Social Security income — double the level under traditional Medicare.

Earlier in his career, Ryan was an advocate for partially privatizing Social Security by allowing younger retirees to steer a portion of their payroll taxes into retirement accounts. That idea collapsed in 2005 as the Alliance worked hard to stop it.

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<th>What does the state’s richest 1% get?</th>
<th>What are the state’s healthcare losses?</th>
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<td>AN AVERAGE TAX CUT OF $29,890</td>
<td>843,000 FEWER RESIDENTS WILL HAVE HEALTH COVERAGE BY 2025</td>
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<th>What does the state’s bottom 60% get?</th>
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<td>AN AVERAGE TAX CUT OF $390</td>
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Reporter and columnist Michael Hiltzik wrote in the *Los Angeles Times* of Ryan, “Of all his powers, the ability to cloud Washington journalists' minds was the most remarkable.”

“Ryan came after our retirement security time after time,” said Robert Roach, Jr., President of the Alliance. “Fortunately for older Americans and anyone who wants to retire one day, we were able to stop his most dangerous plans from becoming law. Now we must make sure we protect retirees from whomever GOP House members elect as their next leader.”

House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) is widely viewed as a likely successor to Ryan, either as Speaker if Republicans maintain control of the House in November, or as Minority Leader if Democrats capture the majority. House Majority Whip Steve Scalise (R-LA) said that he would not challenge Rep. McCarthy if McCarthy runs to lead the caucus.

**Balanced Budget Amendment Fails in House**

A balanced budget constitutional amendment failed in the House on Thursday. A two-thirds majority was needed for passage, and the vote was **233-184**.

“We are grateful to the 6,000 Alliance members who responded when we asked them to send an email to their House member urging a NO vote,” said Richard Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance. “Proposals that would cut our earned benefits are coming fast and furious, and we need to be ready to respond quickly to beat them back.”

If the measure had passed, it would have a dramatic impact on the nation’s economy. Of concern to retirees, the Social Security Administration would be prohibited from using its trust fund reserves to pay current beneficiaries. That means the amount paid in any given year would have to come from the payroll taxes collected in that year. If there was a shortfall, it would result in benefit cuts for beneficiaries.

**Don't Blame "Entitlements" for the National Debt**

A group of economists from the Hoover Institution, a conservative public-policy think tank at Stanford University, recently noted that the federal budget deficit is on track to exceed $1 trillion next year and get worse over time. However, according to economists Martin Neil Baily, Jason Furman, Alan B. Krueger, Laura D'Andrea Tyson and Janet L. Yellen, the Hoover economists were wrong to argue that so-called “entitlements,” including Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, are the sole cause of the deficit problem, while the budget-busting tax bill that was passed last year was described as a “good first step.”

In a *Washington Post* column, the five prominent economists noted that the federal budget was in surplus from 1998 through 2001, but that large tax cuts and unfunded wars have been huge contributors to our current deficit problem. They cite reduction in tax revenue from last year’s GOP tax cuts, not an increase in spending, as the primary reason for the enormous deficit.

“The tax cuts passed last year actually added an amount to America’s long-run fiscal challenge that is roughly the same size as the preexisting shortfalls in Social Security and Medicare,” they wrote. “The tax cuts are reducing revenue by an average of 1.1 percent of GDP over the next four years.”
They state that Social Security needs only modest changes to restore its 75-year solvency.

“Additional revenue is critical because Social Security has become even more vital as fewer and fewer people have defined-benefit pensions," they note.

Pointing to flaws in the Hoover Institution's assumptions and methodology, they recommend "starting with spending goals based on the priorities of the American people," and then setting tax policy to realize adequate revenue to meet those goals.

“Laura D'Andrea Tyson, Janet Yellen and their writing partners were right to address the Hooverites' claim that benefits for the middle class and working class are 'the problem,' but tax cuts for the rich are the cure,” said Joseph Peters, Jr., Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid are under constant attack, and we need experts to speak up when the other side tries to win by tricking us with deeply-flawed arguments.”

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