

UNITED STEELWORKERS
SOAR
STEELWORKERS ORGANIZATION OF ACTIVE RETIREES

CONNECTION

WE'RE STRONGER TOGETHER



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Serving as a poll worker is a valuable way for retirees to give back to your community and support your neighbors. It's one of the most effective ways you can help make sure our democracy works as it should.

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You can help make sure we have a safe, fair, efficient election for all voters.

Go to: <https://www.powerthepolls.org/USW>

(See page 5 of this newsletter for additional information.)

SOAR's Role Is the "Next Level of Activism" for Our Union



I recently passed the 58th anniversary of being a member of the USW, having paid dues to my local union or SOAR since 1966. I became active in the union and have held numerous positions in the organization since the early 1970s. I have seen a lot and been in contact with many people over these years. While our members have always been willing to step up when needed, I believe we are now reaching levels of involvement that make me feel very comfortable regarding our union's future.

I participated in our union's Next Gen Conference earlier this year and recently attended my district conference. I also received reports on the Rapid Response and Canadian National conferences. All these events had significant participation from newly elected local union officers or newly hired members who wanted to learn how to become more involved.

I have also seen the energy and compassion of our union's newer International Officers and District Directors. The members have chosen wisely in their selection of these leaders. They have energized our members and have offered programs and training that make our union stronger and more united than ever. The International and Districts invite SOAR to participate in their actions as a full participant, exchanging ideas and information and educating both groups.

You may ask, why would I spend so much time writing about active USW members and their leaders? The answer is simple. For SOAR to remain a relevant part of the USW, we must continue to bring in new members to SOAR. The majority of our new members come from recently retired local union members who were participating in their local union activities. Their main reason for joining SOAR is not the social events, like attending the Christmas party or the lunch provided at the meeting, but rather the opportunity to continue their activism and to stay connected to our union.

We will have no trouble maintaining and growing our membership if we show them that SOAR is the "Next Level of Activism" for our union by demonstrating what we do for our members and the labor movement.

Bill Pienta, SOAR President

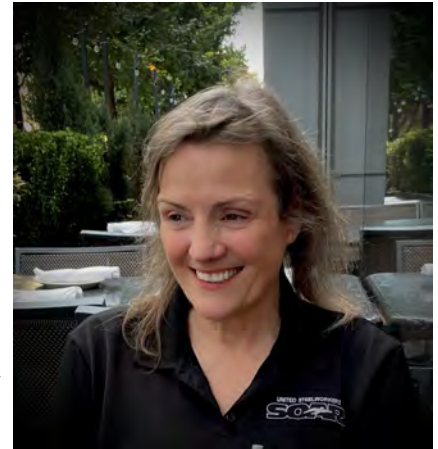
During **Hispanic Heritage Month**, (September 15 - October 15) we recognize the countless contributions Hispanic and Latino/a union members, labor leaders, and civil rights advocates have made to furthering workers' rights in the United States.

Generations of Latino/a and Hispanic activists have been an essential part of our labor movement, fighting against economic discrimination, protecting immigrants' rights, and ensuring all workers can earn a fair day's wage for a fair day's work. It's their sacrifices and clear-eyed leadership that have helped create healthier, safer, and more equitable working conditions for all workers in America.



USW Retirees and Active Members Hopeful for Continued Progress in 2024 Elections

With the 2024 election fresh in our minds, I thought I'd take this opportunity to take stock of the top legislative and policy victories we've secured over the last four years. While we can't possibly list every victory, I'm hopeful that this review will embolden and motivate us for the important work that lies ahead.



Federal legislative and policy victories:

- **Union Pensions Rescued:** 120,000 active and retired USW members were among the 1.3 million union members whose pensions were rescued by the Biden/Harris American Rescue Plan.
- **Lower Prescription Drug Costs** were achieved through the historic Inflation Reduction Act, which empowered Medicare to negotiate costs with drug manufacturers. As a result, Medicare recipients now enjoy a \$35 monthly cap for their insulin and, beginning in 2025, a \$2,000 cap on out-of-pocket prescription costs, saving an estimated 19 million Medicare beneficiaries \$400 per year on average.
- **Renewed, Pro-worker direction** at the National Labor Relations Board has helped spur a massive surge in union elections. President Biden took swift action to fire the former NLRB general counsel who turned the Board against workers, chipping away at our bargaining ability and generally weakening unions. Then, on numerous occasions, Vice President Kamala Harris cast the tie-breaking vote to confirm labor-friendly members to the Board, creating an opportunity to restore and increase Board funding and to reverse Trump-era rules that restricted union activities in American worksites.
- **Historic investments in American manufacturing**, thanks to another tie-breaking vote from Vice President Harris, helped pass the Biden/Harris Inflation Reduction Act. This law is sparking private investment in new manufacturing and has provided existing facilities with the resources to upgrade technology to remain competitive.
- **Hard-fought improvements in workplace health and safety** include a new ban on the import and use of asbestos in worksites and a long-awaited rule to limit workers' exposure to silica dust. Additionally, the Biden/Harris Department of Labor has moved to create a new federal standard to protect workers from heat-related illnesses and death.

State-level legislative and policy victories:

- **Michigan's newly-elected, pro-union governor and legislature** – the state's first in nearly 40 years – acted to restore workers' collective bargaining rights by repealing the state's so-called right-to-work law and putting an end to the unfair pension tax.

- Minnesota’s pro-worker, pro-retiree legislature and governor, Tim Walz (now our endorsed Vice Presidential Nominee), passed a state budget (HF3028/SF3035) that was hailed as the “most significant worker protection bill in state history.”
- In Ohio, voters defeated Issue 1, which would have raised the threshold for voters to amend the constitution to a supermajority of 60 percent and enacted stricter requirements for getting amendments on the ballot.

I hope this much-abbreviated list of accomplishments fills you with confidence and resolve as we gear up for another year of fighting to strengthen union power, enhance workplace safety and health, and protect every American’s right to a secure retirement.

While much attention has been focused on the presidential campaign, we must remember that state and federal lawmakers also make the decisions that impact our access to health care, our ability to afford prescribed medications, the availability of various health care services in our communities, and so much more.

Strengthening retirement security has long been a top priority of Steelworkers, as evidenced by our 2020, 2022 and 2024 *Your Union, Your Voice* (YUYV) survey results. We must remain vigilant in growing union power as we celebrate these policy victories and keep the momentum going.

Julie Stein, SOAR Director



SOAR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE SCHEDULED

The 14th SOAR International Conference is scheduled for April 4-5, 2025, at Caesars Forum Conference Center in Las Vegas, NV. Chapters large enough to send delegates were notified by mail.

For those chapters planning to submit resolutions to the conference, all resolutions must be received in the SOAR office in Pittsburgh, by February 3, 2025.



August 28, 2024

Steelworkers, Make Your Plan to Vote!

[Click here to find your state's voting information and check your registration status.](https://www.uswrr.org/vote-reg-check)
([usw.to/vote-reg-check](https://www.uswrr.org/vote-reg-check))

When union members cast their ballots, it makes our year-round work stronger because elected officials are more responsive to those who vote. It's also a way we hold lawmakers accountable and keep our issues on their radar. Showing up to vote plays a role in the success or failure of these efforts.

Registering to vote ensures that you can exercise this right and have a say in how your government operates. Proper representation help ensures that your interests and needs are considered in the political process and influences policies that impact our union's core values. Being a registered voter also connects you to your community and keeps you informed and involved in local, state, and national matters.

Here are a few reasons to check your voter registration status:

- **Ensure Eligibility:** Checking your status confirms that you are eligible to vote in upcoming elections. It ensures that your registration is active and your information is up to date.
- **Avoid Problems on Election Day:** Verifying your registration ahead of time can prevent issues at the polls, such as being turned away or needing to cast a provisional ballot.
- **Update Information:** If you've moved, changed your name, or had any other changes in personal information, checking your status allows you to update your registration to reflect these changes.
- **Deadlines:** Election laws vary by state, and there are deadlines for registering and updating information. Checking your status helps ensure you meet these deadlines and are eligible to vote.
- **Peace of Mind:** Knowing your registration status is confirmed and accurate provides peace of mind, allowing you to focus on making informed decisions when voting.

Take a quick moment to check your voter registration status [HERE](https://www.uswrr.org/vote-reg-check).
([usw.to/vote-reg-check](https://www.uswrr.org/vote-reg-check))

By voting this year, you help build power for working people. When union members and our families vote, those in office are more responsive to our needs. So make sure that you have a plan to vote!



Want to Know Another Way to Help Protect Democracy? Be a Poll Worker!

Another key way you can help ensure fair and accessible elections nationwide is by working the polls on Election Day. By signing up to be a poll worker, you can help make sure elections run smoothly and polling places stay open in your own community by signing up to be a poll worker [HERE](https://www.powerthepolls.org).

(<https://www.powerthepolls.org>)

USW Rapid Response • (412) 562-2291 • <http://www.uswrr.org> • www.facebook.com/USWRapidResponse

Vote For Yourself Before It's Too Late!



Last year, the UAW's "Stand UP Strikes" proved how important the right to strike is for workers seeking higher wages, better benefits, retirement security and improved working conditions. In most cases, Union activists never have to strike; the simple threat of a strike is enough to push employers to offer fair bargaining agreements. But when the boss wants to play hardball, an effective strike can mean the difference between gaining an equitable contract or settling for something lesser. In short, Union members are reduced to collective begging without the right to strike.

That's why when I heard former President Donald Trump's comments during an interview with billionaire Union buster Elon Musk, it made me cringe with memories of a different era. Trump began his remarks by telling Musk, "You are the greatest cutter." He continued saying, "Look at what you do. You walk in, and you just say: you want to quit? They go on strike – I won't mention the name of the company – but they go on strike, and you say: 'That's okay, you're all gone. You are all gone. So, every one of you is gone.'"

That was Trump praising Musk for firing his employees for Union activities at a New York supplier. Think about that: we have a want-to-be future President telling an employer that it is an excellent move to fire workers looking to form a Union or trying to gain a fair contract. Employers listening to the interview heard Trump's words and were drooling at the mouth. The hopeful next President of the United States had just given Union Busting his seal of approval.

Trump's words took me back to something that occurred almost 43 years ago to the date. Trump's comments came on August 13, 2024, but on August 3, 1981, then-President Ronald Reagan took action to fire 12,000 striking members of PATCO (Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization). I won't argue who was right or wrong at the time. However, it bears saying that while employers had the right to use replacement workers at the time, it didn't happen often. However, Reagan's actions sent a message to big business, and they were listening.

The 1980s and 1990s were among the most tumultuous years of the U.S. labor movement. During that time, employers engaged in strikes and lockouts at record numbers – our Union was no exception. The Steelworkers faced long, bitter battles at U.S. Steel, Ravenswood Aluminum, Bridgestone-Firestone, Wheeling Pittsburgh Steel and Caterpillar, to name just a few. The pattern at those companies repeated itself over and over again. Contract talks would grind to a halt. The boss would lock his workers out and then replace them with scabs that Reagan affectionately referred to as "Permanent Replacement Workers." The use of scabs effectively rendered strikes all but illegal in America.

As a result, the number of strikes in the U.S. dried up, leading to the most extended wage stagnation in American history. It also contributed to significant losses in union membership.

Our Union, the United Steelworkers, effectively brought rogue companies to justice. Still, it came at a considerable price as we spent millions of dollars fighting in court and waging worldwide campaigns to secure fair labor agreements for Steelworkers.

Since those days, Unions have learned to wage corporate campaigns to force employers to the bargaining table, select strike targets more wisely, and choose the right issues to strike over. As a result, the use of replacement workers to break strikes has been reduced. Still, the number of strikes called each year remains well below the pre-Reagan era.

For those of us who lived through the scab years, you know that it is something we do not want to face again. These memories are another reason why Donald Trump should not be elected this fall. The public supports our movement, and over the past four years, Union membership has been growing. We cannot afford to return to the days of an anti-Union Trump National Labor Relations Board. Make your plan to vote this November 5 or sooner. And please, vote for Union-endorsed candidates.

Jay McMurrin, SOAR Emeritus and Legislative Director

The Medicare & You Handbook Is in the Mail

The "Medicare & You" handbook is your official guide to Medicare. An updated printed handbook is mailed to all Medicare households in late September, just in time for Medicare's annual enrollment period, which runs from October 15 – December 7. You can also download a copy anytime, or access it electronically for the most updated information available at Medicare.gov

Keep your handbook as a reference. It has important information about:

- Medicare benefits, costs, rights and protections
- Health and drug plans
- Answers to common questions.

Check out what's new in Medicare to help manage your overall health and wellness. Some changes to Medicare starting January 1, 2025 include:

- The maximum out-of-pocket cost for prescription medications will be capped at \$2,000 for the calendar year.
- A new option of spreading out-of-pocket drug costs across monthly payments throughout the year instead of when they happen.
- Better mental health care
- More resources for caregivers
- Changes to telehealth coverage



Navigating Medicare

Link to Medicare & You Handbook: <https://www.medicare.gov/publications/10050-medicare-and-you.pdf>

Additionally, beneficiaries can contact their State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) to get free, unbiased information about Medicare options in their state.

Find your local SHIP office at <https://www.shiphelp.org/>

Harris Delivered on Jobs

By Dave McCall
USW International President



Anthony Vergara took a job at the Gallo Glass plant in Modesto, Calif., years ago because it offered good wages, family-sustaining benefits and the support of co-workers as committed as he was to building a stronger community.

Together, they've bounced back from a series of fires, weathered global competition and triumphed over other challenges to keep America's largest glass container factory operating around the clock.

But while they take pride in driving Modesto's present prosperity, Vergara said he and 700 other members of United Steelworkers (USW) Local 17M realize that only a transformational "reset" will ensure the factory's long-term survival in a highly competitive, ever-changing worldwide industry.

Fortunately, they're now able to forge that path forward because of cutting-edge technology funded by the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

Vice President Kamala Harris cast the tie-breaking vote in the Senate two years ago to pass the IRA and unlock billions for an advanced manufacturing economy.

Not a single Republican in either chamber of Congress voted for this historic legislation, which is revolutionizing the cement, chemical, glass and steel sectors along with other traditional core industries.

IRA-funded projects are increasing efficiency, reducing costs and shoring up supply chains, better positioning the nation to manufacture the goods needed both for domestic consumption and to trade with the world.

JD Vance, the Republicans' vice presidential candidate, made statements on the campaign trail showing he neither understands the IRA nor knows what it does.

But America's working people get it.

The IRA created more than 170,000 jobs at home so far. And it's projected to create at least 1.5 million more in coming years, including dozens of new positions at the Gallo plant under a Department of Energy (DOE) demonstration grant program also funded partly by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

In April, the DOE awarded Gallo up to \$75 million to build a new, hybrid electric gas furnace, to be fueled by locally produced renewable energy.

The furnace will cut emissions, reduce costs and increase the use of recycled material in the manufacturing process. And it will help to keep the facility – where workers make bottles for wine, olive oil, sparkling waters and other products—viable and competitive for generations.

“It’s exciting to see the future and what that’s going to look like,” said Vergara, the Local 17M president, noting the lower emissions will help to make Modesto a better community to call home.

“We live here,” Vergara said of USW members. “We raise our kids here. None of us works for any reason except to provide for our families.”

Besides bringing additional jobs, the new furnace will save Gallo money and afford the union more bargaining power during the next round of negotiations, noted Vergara. Just as important, the project reinforces union members’ solidarity with the community by involving local schools and civic groups in job training and glass recycling initiatives.

The investments in Modesto and other parts of California mirror the IRA’s impact on the rest of the country. For example, the DOE is providing millions for similar capital upgrades at the O-I and Libbey glass plants in Ohio, Vance’s home state.

And it’s providing up to \$550 million for the construction of two electric melting furnaces at the Cleveland-Cliffs complex in Middletown, Ohio, Vance’s hometown, a project aimed at slashing emissions while boosting America’s position as the most efficient, highest-quality steel producer in the world.

This project alone will create hundreds of construction jobs and nearly 200 permanent positions while helping to sustain demand for iron ore produced by USW members working at mines in Michigan and Minnesota.

“Keeping steel and other products made in this country is critical,” observed Ronnie “Pup” Wardrup, a member of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR) executive board, who worked for a steel slitting facility in Middletown and recalled being laid off numerous times during the industry downturn of the 1980s.

While Vance talks about the need to provide brighter futures for communities like Middletown, Wardrup said, Harris and the IRA are already doing exactly that.

That’s why growing numbers of Ohio mayors, Republicans and Democrats alike, brag about what the IRA helps them accomplish. And even congressional Republicans who refused to support the legislation two years ago – an obstructionism that prompted Harris to step forward and cast her tie-breaking vote – now support the IRA because of how it’s transforming their districts.

“What this says about Biden and Harris to me is that their focus is where it needs to be – creating jobs,” Wardrup said. “They’re pretty much lasered into that effort. The Inflation Reduction Act is just one example.”



Ronnie “Pup” Wardrup

Even as the IRA builds out core industries, it’s also expanding America’s foothold in solar, wind, electric vehicles and other new sectors, creating even more jobs.

In Ravenswood, W.Va., for example, the DOE this spring announced up to \$75 million for a first-of-its-kind advanced aluminum casting plant at the Constellium complex employing members of USW Local 5668.

At the same time, USW-represented construction workers right now are helping to build a new titanium ingot plant in Ravenswood that’s going to be powered by a solar field – yet another project made possible by the IRA.

“People are going to come in here,” said Dave Martin, a recently retired USW activist and a new member of SOAR. He is also the president of the Mason-Jackson-Roane Labor Council and was referring to the need for workers and suppliers fueled by the IRA.



Dave Martin

“They’re going to spend money in the area,” he continued. “It’s a big change for the local economy. It’s starting to make a comeback.”

SOAR Chapters to Elect Officers This Fall

While voters across the country are heading to the polls to choose their national and state leaders in the U.S., SOAR members will participate in their own elections to select officers for all our SOAR chapters, including Canada.

According to Article 6 of the SOAR Chapter By-laws, elective chapter officers are the President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, and three Trustees. The chapter may decide to add an office of Financial Secretary and/or to separate the office of Secretary and Treasurer. All positions serve four-year terms.

The nomination of officers will be held at the chapter meeting in October, and the election will be held at the November meeting.

No member is allowed to hold more than one office in a chapter, although chapter officers may serve on the SOAR Executive Board or as a District Coordinator. To hold a chapter office, members must be in good standing at the time of nomination and election.

If a chapter does not meet regularly during October, it must hold both the nomination and election of officers during the November meeting.

Any vacancies caused by ineligibility, death or resignation shall be filled by appointment by the remaining chapter executive board members until the next election, except that if the vacancy is in the office of President, the Vice President shall serve as President for the remainder of the term.

SOAR Chapter Connection

A bi-monthly publication of SOAR

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Articles and Photos Requested

The next deadline for the SOAR in Action magazine will be September 10, 2024 and articles should be emailed to the SOAR Director Julie Stein at jstein@usw.org



The deadline to submit material for the next issue of the SOAR Connection newsletter is November 20, 2024. Email your article to soar3@icloud.com.

“To leave the world better than you found it, sometimes you have to pick up other peoples’ trash.”

Bill Nye, quoted in Good Housekeeping

McNeil Report

I suppose that most retirees set aside some time during the day to exercise in order to help keep our weight down and keep the old joints limbered up.

Elaine and I both have recumbent trikes and ride each day around a lake not far from our home. It’s road is nine mile around the lake and takes us about an hour.

During the winter months, we bring the trikes into the house and just put the rear tires on rollers.

Everyone has their own method to exercise but we all know that we should do it faithfully if at all possible.

Old Charlie & Elaine Say:

She tells me what to wear and when to shave. She tells me where we will eat and what to order. She tells me where to turn, where to park, and to take my phone. She tells me what time we are leaving, how to get there, and when to come home. She tells me people’s names and who they are. She is SO bossy!

“I’m not bossy; I just have good leadership skills.”



Project 2025 Would Push Everyone With Medicare Into Medicare Advantage

By Diane Archer



Project 2025 is the brainchild of The Heritage Foundation and a roadmap for the Republicans if Donald Trump is elected President. If implemented, Project 2025 would push everyone with Medicare into Medicare Advantage, with restricted access to care, instead of enrolling them in Traditional Medicare and allowing them to decide whether they want to enroll in Medicare Advantage. Project 2025 would likely privatize Medicare and endanger the



health and well-being of more than 65 million older adults and people with disabilities.

For a start, if President Trump becomes President and he carries out the Medicare goals of Project 2025, people who sign up for Medicare will be enrolled automatically in a Medicare Advantage plan—a corporate health plan the government pays to provide Medicare benefits and rewards for denying care. Who knows if that plan would cover the doctors and hospitals they want to use or provide them with the care they need. So many Medicare Advantage plans are engaged in [widespread inappropriate delays and denials of care](#).

Yes, people would still have the right to switch to Traditional Medicare, the government-administered program that provides coverage from virtually any doctor or hospital anywhere in the United States. But, would they know they could disenroll from Medicare Advantage? Or, would they be locked in, unable to enroll in Traditional Medicare as millions of people in Medicare Advantage are today?

Project 2025 would aggravate health inequalities. As it is, Traditional Medicare is not affordable to most people with Medicare. Because Traditional Medicare lacks an out-of-pocket cap, people also have supplemental coverage to protect themselves financially. But, supplemental coverage is both expensive and not guaranteed. So, until Congress reforms Traditional Medicare to include an out-of-pocket maximum, most people with Medicare have no choice but to enroll in a Medicare Advantage plan.

If conservatives prevail, the for-profit corporate health insurers will take over Medicare entirely before long. It's a cash cow for them. They have the money, the power and the mission to drain the Medicare Trust Fund and drive up their profits. Health care costs for people with Medicare will soar. Those with complex and costly conditions likely will face untold challenges getting the care they need.

Diane Archer is founder of the Medicare Rights Center, a resource for boomers, older adults, and care providers. She also serves on the board of directors of the center for Health & Democracy.

Source: justcareusa.org - the buzz for boomers & carers

The SOAR Office Has T-shirts and Ball Caps Available for Purchase

Now Available!

\$15



\$15 each + the cost of shipping. Contact the SOAR Office.

866-208-4420

Now Available!



SOAR ball caps for purchase!

\$20 each + the cost of shipping.

Contact the SOAR Office.

866-208-4420

\$20



Not All Footballs Are Alike



It's that time of year again and, no, we are not talking about the upcoming presidential election.

It's football season in America, a time that brings joy and camaraderie to millions of fans on a weekly basis.

At the Alliance for American Manufacturing, we work to promote policies that benefit U.S. manufacturers and workers. To fulfill this mission, we continuously profile companies that keep it Made in America. Our depictions present a positive outlook for America's workforce and the companies that employ the men and women of manufacturing.

One such company is the Wilson Football Factory in Ada, Ohio which makes its line of American footballs that serve gridiron groups from Pee-Wee leagues to the National Football League. The "pigskins" are hand-crafted by 140 production workers in a new 80,000 square foot facility in the small, rural village in Ohio.

Wilson manufactures most of its sporting goods overseas, but the official footballs of the NFL and college teams have been produced in the U.S. for the past 83 years. While not members of the United Steelworkers, the production crew at the Wilson Football Factory is union represented by Local 1385 of the Chicago and Midwest Regional Joint Board of Workers United.

Wilson supplies the NFL with 27,000 footballs a year with each team getting 780 footballs for the regular season. A little-known fact is that each NFL football comes with a sensor in the bladder of the ball that interacts with sensors on a player's shoulder pads, the pylons, and the chain gangs. The data from the sensors is a valuable tool used by coaches to assess a player's performance.

The Wilson Football Factory holds the record as the longest running partnership between a professional sports organization and a sporting goods supplier. The Factory hosts regular tours of the manufacturing process and has a small museum documenting the history of the American-made Wilson football.

To learn more about the American-made, union-made footballs go online to:

<https://www.americanmanufacturing.org/blog/wilson-opened-a-brand-new-nfl-football-factory-this-summer-right-next-to-the-old-one/>

You can also visit the Wilson Football Factory website for more details and tour information at <https://www.wilson.com/en-us/explore/football/ada-ohio-factory?fb>

Jeff Bonior is a staff writer at the Alliance for American Manufacturing



As President and Vice President, Kamala Harris and Tim Walz Will Look Out For Seniors

by Robert Roach, Jr.



With early voting under way in many states, a large percentage of voters have already cast their ballots. For those who have not, and are still undecided, the Alliance for Retired Americans has endorsed the Kamala Harris-Tim Walz ticket for President and Vice President.

Vice President Harris will protect Social Security and increase benefits. Donald Trump proposed four budgets that slash Social Security, proposed cutting “entitlements,” and even promised to cut Social Security’s funding.

Donald Trump has tried to take credit for lower drug prices, but don’t be fooled. It was Kamala Harris whose tie-breaking vote in the Senate ensured that Medicare beneficiaries who need insulin are paying no more than a \$35 a month copay, and all their recommended vaccines are now free. Her vote also ensured that out of pocket spending on prescription drugs for seniors with Medicare Part D will go down to \$2,000 next year.

Donald Trump proposed a budget that cut Medicare by \$500 billion over ten years. Kamala Harris has pledged to protect Medicare from cuts and supports expanding it to include guaranteed vision, dental, and hearing benefits.

Donald Trump cut safety inspections at nursing homes and proposed four budgets that cut Medicaid. He also promises to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which protects people with preexisting health conditions. Kamala Harris will build on the ACA to provide more affordable health care.

And it was Kamala Harris’ tie-breaking vote in the Senate to pass the Butch Lewis Act, as part of the American Rescue Plan, that helped Joe Biden save millions of workers’ and retirees’ pensions. Thanks to the Biden-Harris Administration, 2 to 3 million workers’ pension plans now are solvent and able to pay full benefits through at least 2051.

We must elect Kamala Harris and Tim Walz President and Vice President for the sake of older Americans across the nation. Please go to www.vote.org if you have not already made your plan to vote and to learn the laws on voting by mail in your state. You can enter your address and check your registration at that site to make sure there are no surprises when you arrive at the polls.

Robert Roach, Jr. is president of the Alliance for Retired Americans. He was previously General Secretary–Treasurer of the IAMAW. For more information, visit www.retiredamericans.org.

Staying up to Date with COVID-19 Vaccines

What To Know

- Everyone ages 6 months and older should get a 2024-2025 COVID-19 vaccine.
- The COVID-19 vaccine helps protect you from severe disease, hospitalization, and death.
- It is especially important to get your 2024-2025 COVID-19 vaccine if you are ages 65 and older, are at high risk for severe COVID-19, or have never received a COVID-19 vaccine.
- Vaccine protection decreases over time, so it is important to stay up to date with your COVID-19 vaccine.

Source: CDC.gov

COVID-19 Booster Shots

Is a COVID-19 booster shot covered by Medicare?

Yes. Medicare covers a COVID-19 vaccine booster shot at no cost to you. You can get a booster from the same COVID-19 vaccine that you originally got, or choose a different one. **Now is the time to take the next step toward added protection through booster shots - don't wait.** By getting vaccinated, including a booster shot, you're helping protect yourself and those around you.

Everyone eligible should get a booster, so it's important to remind your friends and family to get one too!

Source: Medicare.gov



Play It Safe! Order Your COVID Tests

Starting September 26, 2024, every U.S. household can order another free round of COVID-19 tests – shipped straight to your door. Head to www.COVIDTests.gov to order yours.

Be aware that you can receive a COVID booster and a flu shot at the same time, per the CDC Centers for Disease Control.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/coadministration.htm>.

Social Security COLA Projected To Rise

If you're a Social Security beneficiary, you can expect a boost in your checks starting in 2025.

While the official Social Security [cost-of-living adjustment](#) (COLA) won't be released until Oct. 10, the increase for next year is estimated at 2.5 percent, according to The Senior Citizens League (TSCl), a nonpartisan senior citizens group. That number is based on data from the Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W).

A 2.5 percent increase would raise the [average Social Security payment](#) for retired workers from \$1,920.48 (as of August 2024) to \$1,968.49 in 2025, an increase of \$48.01. You'll notice the COLA increase on your monthly checks starting in January.

The index currently used to measure inflation, CPI-W, underestimates the inflation that Social Security beneficiaries experience since it does not give enough weight to expenses like health care or housing costs. To address this growing issue, TSCl urges Congress to adopt legislation that would base the COLA on an inflation index specifically for seniors, like the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly (CPI-E).

The CPI-E regularly puts the spending inflation for seniors at two-tenths of a percentage point higher than the rate at which the CPI-W increases. That may seem like an insignificant amount, but over a twenty-five-year retirement, COLAs do compound significantly. TSCl estimates that a senior who filed for Social Security with average benefits over thirty years ago would have received nearly \$14,000 more in retirement if the CPI-E had been used.

The Social Security Administration currently pays out benefits to nearly 71 million Americans.

Sources:

www.bankrate.com

www.seniorsleague.org



Watch Those Birds

Who said that retirement is boring? Gosh, there is so much to do. Not just working on fixing up the house and caring for your property but doing what you never had time to do before retirement.

Many love to golf, hunt, or fish, while others like to sit on the porch and watch the birds come and go throughout the year. In the spring, we look forward to the arrival of the Baltimore Orioles and then the Hummingbirds. We always stock up on oranges for the Orioles, and although we used to have regular Hummingbird feeders, Elaine now prefers using those Kikkoman Soy Sauce bottles. They make great feeders.

In the summer, the geese return, followed by the barn swallows, which flit here and there in the evening, getting their fill of bugs and mosquitoes. Occasionally, we spot a couple of pileated woodpeckers, and later, the ducks and turkeys arrive. Over the years, we've enjoyed watching and caring for our feathered friends. We wish everyone a happy fall as we bid them farewell to their winter homes. *Charlie and Elaine Averill*



Allocation of Delegates for the Fourteenth International SOAR Conference

The **2025 International SOAR Conference** is scheduled for Friday and Saturday, April 4-5, 2025, at the Caesars Forum Conference Center in Las Vegas, NV. Delegates will be arriving on April 3 and departing on April 6.

Chapters with over 200 dues-paying members according to our records as of September 1, 2024, are allocated the following number of delegates: (Elections to be held in November.)

- One delegate for each Chapter of 201 – 500 members
- Two delegates for each Chapter of 501 – 700 members
- Three delegates for each Chapter of 701 – 900 members
- Delegates shall increase at the above rate for Chapters of larger size

Chapters with less than 201 members are eligible to attend the Conference in one of the allocated “at-large” slots. The number of at-large delegates to each District shall be one for every 300 dues-paying members or a majority fraction thereof, after subtracting the membership numbers of the larger (201 or greater) chapters.

As outlined in our Rules of Procedure for the Nomination and Election of SOAR Conference Delegates (Appendix A), the process for electing “at-large” delegates can either be by an election at a district conference, or other method, determined by the SOAR Board Member and USW Director, for that geographical area and approved by the SOAR Executive Board. (See page 20 – Appendix A, Article III Section 2.)

In order to be elected a delegate to this conference, the member must be a member in good standing at the time of the election. As in the past, hotel, travel and a stipend will be provided for all approved delegates out of the District SOAR fund. All delegates will be sent an official call letter that outlines the procedure to make their air and hotel reservations well in advance of the conference.

Please contact your SOAR Executive Board Member to obtain information as to how your District will complete its at-large delegate election process. Their contact information is listed below.

SOAR CONTACT INFORMATION			
District	Executive Board Member	Contact	Email Address
1	Ronnie “Pup” Wardrup	513-518-3336	rwardrup60@outlook.com
4	Al Polk	508-942-8319	alpolk138@gmail.com
7	Dorine Godinez	574-971-4215	uswsoar222@gmail.com
8	Ronnie Watson	34-770-7519	ronaldwsr1949@yahoo.com
9	Claude Karr	205-531-2744	mkarr777@gmail.com
10	Dave McLimans	610-857-4771	parkesburg151@comcast.net
11	Bonnie Carey	309-721-7908	bonnie.carey@gmail.com
12	Joel Buchanan	719-821-1486	joelbuck99@yahoo.com
13	Ruben Garza	615-585-0983	rgarza4247@aol.com

APPENDIX A**SOAR CONFERENCE DELEGATES - NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS:
RULES OF PROCEDURE**

As approved by the USW International Executive Board on December 13, 2022:

ARTICLE I INTRODUCTION

Section 1. The SOAR By-laws, Article IX, provide that the current SOAR Officers and Executive Board members hold office until the International SOAR Conference, to be held in conjunction with the USW International Convention. The delegates to the SOAR Conference are to elect the new Officers and Executive Board members for a term of (3) years.

Section 2. The following procedures shall govern the nomination and election process for the delegates to the SOAR Conference.

Article VII, Section 2 of the SOAR By-laws as amended reads as follows:

“The District SOAR organizations shall consist of representatives from the geographic area covered by the corresponding District of the USW. The District Representatives shall be selected from the membership in each District. The District Representatives will constitute the delegates to the SOAR Conference. The number of District Representatives will be based upon the membership in each District in accordance with the procedures established by the SOAR Executive Board with the approval of the Executive Board of the USW.”

ARTICLE II AUTOMATIC DELEGATES AND OBSERVERS

Section 1. SOAR Officers, Executive Board members and Coordinators (one (1) Coordinator, who is a SOAR member and not on the USW staff, per District selected by the USW District Director) shall be considered automatic delegates to the SOAR Conference. SOAR Coordinators who are not automatic delegates or who are not elected as District Representatives and SOAR Coordinators who are employed by the USW may attend the SOAR Conference as observers.

ARTICLE III ELECTION OF SOAR CONFERENCE DELEGATES

Section 1. SOAR Chapters with more than 200 dues paying members. These SOAR Chapters shall elect their allotted delegate(s) at their regularly scheduled chapter meeting six (6) months prior to the date the International Conference is to be held. If a SOAR Chapter does not have a regularly scheduled meeting in that month the election may be held in either the month before or the month after, upon notification of such variance to the District Executive Board Member. The SOAR in Action magazine shall contain information alerting the membership to the upcoming election of delegates in an issue to be published no later than seven (7) months prior to the date the International SOAR Conference is to be held.

Section 2. At-Large Delegates. The remaining allotted delegates from each district will be known as “At-Large Delegates” and will be elected at a District Conference or several geographic Conferences within the District. To be considered a candidate for At-Large Delegate, any member in good standing must attend the District Conference in their geographic area or submit a letter to the District Executive Board Member at least seven (7) days prior to the date of the Conference indicating they would like their name submitted for nomination and will accept if nominated. Only the delegates to the District or Geographic Conference who are from a Chapter of 200 or less members shall be eligible to vote for the At-large delegates from that District or geographic area. Procedures for conducting this election may vary from District to District, but the election must be by secret ballot, unless no contest exists. This section may be amended to better serve the situation in the Districts as needed as long as such amendment is approved by the SOAR Executive Board and serves to allow for fair representation of the members from the smaller SOAR Chapters.

Section 3. Allocation of Delegates.

(a) The number of delegates allotted to each District shall be one per every 300 dues paying members or a majority fraction thereof; provided that each District shall have at least one representative.

(b) The number of delegates allotted to each SOAR Chapter of more than 200 members shall be as follows:

One delegate for each Chapter of 201 to 500 members

Two delegates for each Chapter of 501 to 700 members

Three delegates for each Chapter of 701 to 900 members

Delegates shall increase at the above rate for Chapters of larger size

The Director of SOAR shall furnish each SOAR Chapter with a report on their current membership and the number of delegate(s) they are eligible to elect at their SOAR Chapter meeting no later than seven (7) months prior to the date the International Conference is to be held.

Section 4. Eligibility. To be eligible to be elected as a SOAR Conference Delegate from a SOAR Chapter or as an At-large delegate a person must be a member in good standing.

Director's Note: The SOAR office sent updated membership lists to the SOAR chapter presidents and recording secretaries to confirm the number of dues-paying members (members in good standing) their chapter has as of September 1, 2024.

As per the rules of procedure outlined in Appendix A, the chapter's membership size on September 1, 2024, determined the chapter's allotment of delegates to the International SOAR Conference.

SOAR Chapter Resolutions

The **Fourteenth International SOAR Conference** will be held on **Friday and Saturday, April 4-5, 2025**.

All SOAR Chapter resolutions, to be considered by the International Conference, must be adopted by the Chapter and sent to the SOAR Director. They must be in the Director's hands no later than 60 days prior to the convening of the International Conference. (**Next year all resolutions must be received in the SOAR office in Pittsburgh by February 3, 2025.**) The SOAR Director shall submit all Chapter resolutions and any recommendations of the SOAR Executive Board to the Chairperson of the resolution committee.

Resolutions must be typewritten or word-processed on separate sheets of paper and only on one (1) side of the paper. In order for the resolution to be considered they must be signed by the Chapter President and the Recording Secretary.

Mail resolutions to:

**SOAR Resolutions
Julie Stein, Director
60 Blvd. of the Allies
Pittsburgh, PA 15222**

See next page for an example of the format and content for drafting resolutions

Feel free to call SOAR's toll-free number if you have any questions. (866) 208-4420.



This is an example of the format and content for drafting resolutions

Please use for reference, as needed

Resolution for Consideration at the 2025 SOAR International Conference

Resolution calling for: (Give the resolution a title or description of what it is about. State the issue/problem.)

Whereas, (Explanation – list as many “whereas(s)” or reason(s) to support why the “resolve(s)” would be the remedy or solution of the issue or concern.)

Whereas,

Whereas,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, (Include as many “resolve(s)” as needed to support or remedy the issue or concern.)

~ SAMPLE RESOLUTION~

Resolution for Consideration at the 2025 International SOAR Conference

Resolution calling for: Expanding SOAR Membership Eligibility

Whereas, many chapters of SOAR no longer have active local unions due to shutdowns, moving to other localities, bankruptcies, and other reasons.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, we follow the lead of the Alliance for Retired Americans, which provides, “Retirees who are not former union members, and who support the goals of the Alliance, will be eligible to join.”

Respectfully submitted by, Chapter XX-XX

President’s Signature Required

Recording Secretary’s Signature Required

Name, President

Name, Recording Secretary

Date: _____

Date: _____



President



Photo: "Donald Trump," Gage Skidmore, Flickr, CC BY-SA 2.0

Where They Stand

KAMALA HARRIS

DONALD TRUMP

SOCIAL SECURITY

Favors Increasing Social Security Benefits¹

YES

NO

Proposed 4 Budgets that Cut Social Security²

NO

YES

Proposed to Cut "Entitlements"³

NO

YES

Promised to Cut Social Security's Funding⁴

NO

YES

PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICES

Passed Law Capping Out of Pocket Prescription Drug Costs at \$2,000⁵

YES

NO

Enacted a Law Capping Insulin Copays at \$35 for ALL Medicare Beneficiaries⁵

YES

NO

Passed Law Requiring Medicare to Negotiate Lower Drug Prices with Drug Corporations^{5,6}

YES

NO

Passed Law Making Vaccines Free for Medicare Beneficiaries⁵

YES

NO

Passed Law Penalizing Drug Corporations That Raise Drug Prices Faster Than Inflation⁵

YES

NO

MEDICARE

Proposed Budget That Cut \$500 Billion from Medicare Over 10 Years⁷

NO

YES

Supports Expanding Medicare to Include Guaranteed Vision, Dental, and Hearing Benefits⁸

YES

NO



President



Photo: "Donald Trump," Gage Skidmore, Flickr, CC BY-SA 2.0

Where They Stand KAMALA HARRIS DONALD TRUMP

HEALTH CARE

Cut Safety Inspections at Nursing Homes⁹

NO

YES

Proposed 4 Budgets that Cut Medicaid^{2, 10}

NO

YES

Promises to Repeal the Affordable Care Act and its Protections for People with Pre-Existing Health Conditions^{8, 11}

NO

YES

PENSIONS

Voted for a Law that Saved More than 2 Million Workers' Pensions¹²

YES

NO

The stakes are high. To learn how to cast your ballot, visit vote.org.

Sources

1. ("What Kamala Harris Has Said About Medicare, Social Security," Newsweek, July 22, 2024.), ("CNBC Transcript: Former President of the United States Donald Trump Speaks with CNBC's Squawk Box Today," CNBC, March 11, 2024.) 2. ("Trump Budget Gets Two-Thirds of Its Cuts From Programs for Low- and Moderate-Income People," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Sep. 29, 2017.), ("Trump Budget Deeply Cuts Health, Housing, Other Assistance for Low and Moderate Income," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Feb. 14, 2018.), ("Trump said he wouldn't cut Medicaid, Social Security, and Medicare. His 2020 budget cuts all 3.," Vox, March 12, 2019.), ("Trump's 2021 Budget Would Cut \$1.6 Trillion From Low-Income Programs," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, March 9, 2020.) 3. ("Former President Donald Trump on Entitlements: 'There's Tremendous Numbers of Things You Can Do,'" CNBC, March 11, 2024.), ("Trump Mentions Cutting Entitlements and Biden Pounces," New York Times, March 11, 2024.) 4. ("Trump Eyes Social Security Cuts By Slashing Payroll Tax," Common Dreams, April 18, 2024.) 5. (H.R. 5376, Roll Call No. 325, August 7, 2022), ("Vice President Kamala Harris breaks deadlock in Inflation Reduction Act 'vote-a-rama,'" Salon, August 7, 2022.) 6. ("Trump Backs Off Medicare Drug Price Negotiations," ASH Clinical News, Nov. 24, 2019.), ("Trump Draws Ire After Retreat on Drug Prices Pledge," The Hill, Nov. 24, 2019.), ("Trump on Medicare Price Negotiations and Executive Power," Axios, February 7, 2024.) 7. ("Medicare in the 2021 Trump Budget," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Feb. 13, 2020.) 8. ("What a Kamala Harris presidency would mean for health care in America," NBC News, July 22, 2024.) 9. ("4 Ways a Kamala Harris Presidency Could Affect Retirees' Finances," GoBankingRates, July 22, 2024.), ("FACT SHEET: Biden-Harris Administration Takes Steps to Crack Down on Nursing Homes That Endanger Resident Safety," White House, September 1, 2023.), ("Long-Term Care Policy: Trump vs. Biden," Center for Medicare Advocacy, Oct 22, 2020.) 10. ("The Trump Medicaid Record: Big Goals, Yet Few Successes," KFF Health News, Oct. 29, 2020.) 11. ("Trump doubles down, saying 'Obamacare Sucks' and must be replaced," NBC News, November 29, 2023.), ("Obamacare Trump Administration," CNN, April 12, 2024.), ("Trump's Claim That He Will Always Protect Those with Pre-existing Conditions," Washington Post, June 29, 2020.), ("Trump 'Affirms' Preexisting Condition Protections Enacted by Obamacare," Kaiser Family Foundation, Sept. 25, 2020.) 12. (H.R. 1319, Roll Call No. 73, March 4, 2021), ("American Rescue Plan," White House Fact Sheet.), ("Marci Kaptur Slams Trump Administration Budget Chief Calling Much-Needed Pension Protections 'Horrible' for America," Representative Marcy Kaptur's Official Website, Jan. 20, 2018.), ("Trump Administration on Pensions," YouTube, Jan. 20, 2018.)

