



CONNECTION

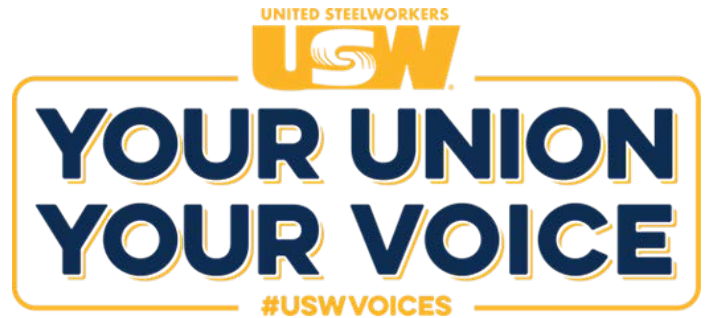
WE'RE STRONGER TOGETHER



Tom Conway, USW International President

We want to hear from you!

CLICK TO TAKE THE SURVEY



USW
YOUR UNION
YOUR VOICE
#USWVOICES

USW Survey

Please take a few minutes to share your thoughts about what matters most to you.
Mark responses like this: ● Not like this: ⊖ ⊖

Please rate the following from 1-5 depending on how important the issue is to you.
(1 = not important, 2 = low importance, 3 = neutral, 4 = important, 5 = very important)

	1	2	3	4	5
Agreements and laws that protect U.S. workers.	0	0	0	0	0
That support our ability to form unions and negotiate strong	0	0	0	0	0
protections in federal law.	0	0	0	0	0
predictable work hours.	0	0	0	0	0
and prescription drugs.	0	0	0	0	0
using domestic components.	0	0	0	0	0
that protect jobs.	0	0	0	0	0

2022 Your Union, Your Voice Membership Survey

Get the survey at www.uswvoices.org

You can fill out the survey on line at the above web address -or-

You can request a paper survey in either English or Spanish at the same web address.

We want to hear from you. Please take a few minutes to share your thoughts about what matters most to you. Thanks!

Once completed, mail your survey to:

United Steelworkers
ATTN: Eric Russell
60 Blvd. of the Allies
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Your Union, Your Voice



Based on this edition's cover, you've probably already concluded that our union is embarking upon another round of the Your Union, Your Voice campaign.

We first launched Your Union, Your Voice in 2019 because we wanted to make sure USW members' and retirees' opinions were reflected at every level of our union's work.

We circulated a union-wide membership survey, and we held 170 town hall meetings. This provided a valuable opportunity for our District Directors, other elected union leaders and staff to hear what was on our members' and retirees' minds.

The feedback you provided in your survey responses and at town halls helped shape our work throughout 2020, and continues to inform our efforts as we head into 2022.

Beginning in April, USW Districts will again hold town hall meetings in locations across the United States. All USW members, retirees and families are welcome to attend and be part of these important discussions.

Additionally, we have launched another membership survey so we can know where our members and retirees stand on some of the biggest issues facing working Americans today.

You can access the survey at www.uswvoices.org. Town hall meetings will be posted on this website, publicized through our social media channels and shared by USW Districts. There are already more than 150 town halls scheduled, and you should expect many more to appear on that list by the time you read this.

Our common values like fair pay, safe workplaces, a secure retirement, and vibrant communities connect us as union members.

Please take the time to attend a town hall meeting, participate in this survey and share this information widely throughout your SOAR chapters and fellow USW retirees and families.

Your voice is an essential part of this effort!

Julie Stein, SOAR Director

“I still find each day too short for all the thoughts I want to think, all the walks I want to take, all the books I want to read, and all the friends I want to see.”

-Burroughs

Our Mission Will Not Change



I recently attended the USW Installation of the International Executive Board and listened to President Conway speak about our union's plan for Organizing. Many of our traditional businesses have changed significantly and, in most cases, have seen a reduction in membership. So, I took a look at a few of the industries and what I discovered was a surprise.

In 1980 the U.S. steel industry was one of the most efficient globally and used 10-man hours to produce a ton (mhpt) of steel. In 2010 that number was 1.2 mhpt. In some of the most modern mills, the manpower to produce a ton of steel is well below 1 mhpt.

In 2021 U.S. car dealerships sold approximately 15 million vehicles. In the past, when dealerships used colorful brochures to sell a car, it was estimated that seven brochures were handed out to prospective buyers for each sale of a vehicle. That 105 million brochures represents a lot of top-quality paper that, in most cases, is no longer used. Likewise, many of us in SOAR remember when our paychecks were distributed to us each week in an envelope. Now millions of workers receive their pay by direct deposit.

As we all know, gas and oil have been in the headlines lately, so I looked at the statistics regarding refineries in the U.S. and found that in the last 20 years, there have been 24 refineries that have been permanently shut down. As for new refineries, there has not been a new refinery built in the U.S. in almost 30 years.

As the membership in the USW changes, the membership of SOAR will also change. However, as these changes do occur, our mission will stay the same: To improve the standard and quality of living for our active and retired members, and the labor community.

Bill Pienta, SOAR President

Reminder Notice for SOAR Chapters:

Please contact the SOAR Office immediately if your chapter hasn't turned in your Annual Financial Report Form for 2021. SOAR Office toll-free number: 866-208-4420



SOAR Chapter
Connection

A bi-monthly publication
of SOAR

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Eric Russell, Copy Editor

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Address editorial material to:

SOAR

60 Blvd of the Allies

Pittsburgh, PA 15222



Articles and Photos Requested

- The deadline to submit articles for next publication of the SOAR Chapter Connection newsletter is May 25. Email articles and photos to soar3@icloud.com Photos should have a short caption included. Thanks so much.
- The next deadline to print for the SOAR in Action magazine will be June 24, and articles should be emailed to the SOAR Director Julie Stein at jstein@usw.org



H A P P Y S P R I N G !
STAY HEALTHY. STAY ACTIVE. STAY SAFE.

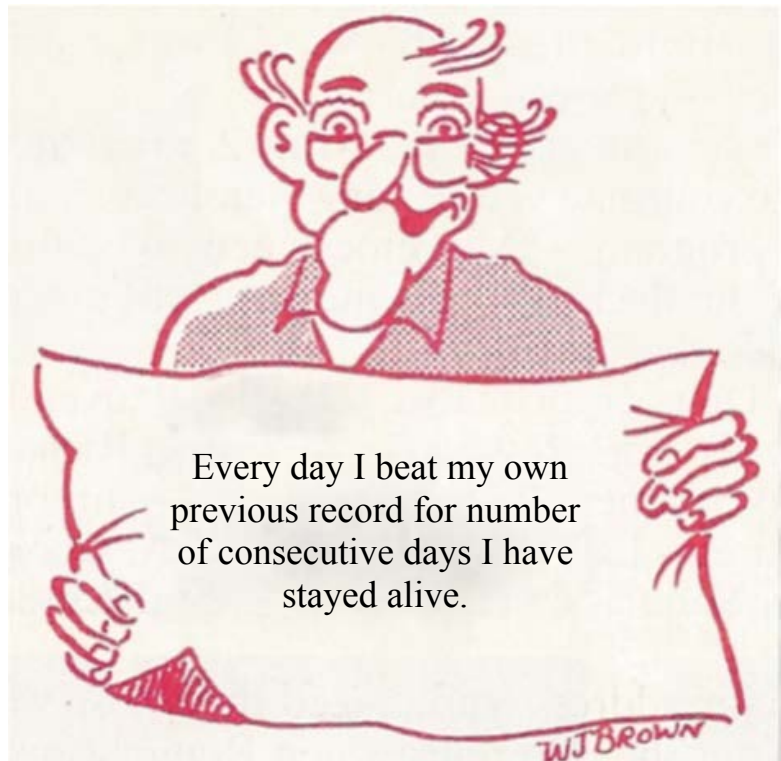
The McNeil Report

The famous Olympic skier, Picabo Street (pronounced Peek-A-Boo) is not just an athlete...she is now a nurse currently working in the intensive Care Unit of a large metropolitan hospital.

She however is not permitted to answer the hospital telephones. It caused too much confusion when she would answer the phone and say...Picabo, ICU.

Annapolis, Md. (PAI) - Mary Harris “Mother” Jones’ favorite method of “hell-raising” was “to lead an army of enraged women” upon a non-union coal mine, “making a frightful clatter, pounding on tin wash tubs. This visitation...was terrifying to both the mules and the non-union workers, usually stampeding both - with the women in pursuit.”

Source: SOAR Executive Board Connection Issue 8 Dec. 2005



Welcome Aboard, Eric Russell



We've recently realized that we are long overdue in introducing our Copy Editor, Eric Russell, whose name has appeared for some time alongside our Content Editor and SOAR Director, Julie Stein. In this edition, you'll see Eric's name on page 4.

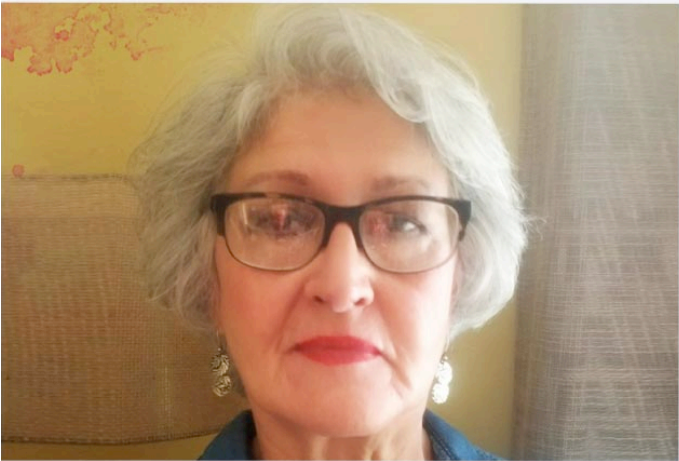
In June, Eric will celebrate his 15th year with the USW. He works mostly in the political/electoral efforts of our union, but also contributes regularly to our SOAR publications.

Eric earned his undergraduate degree from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, as well a Master's Degree from University of Pittsburgh. He is the proud son of a 40-year member of the United Mine Workers of America. And, before he passed in 2003, Eric's grandfather celebrated 50 years as a member of the Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers Union.

Meet Our Trailblazing Women of Steel

In honor of Women's History Month, our union is highlighting our very own members and their trailblazing stories, including SOAR members. To meet more Trailblazing Women of Steel, go to <https://www.usw.org/news/media-center/articles/2022/meet-our-trailblazing-women-of-steel>


TRAILBLAZING WOMEN



Bonnie used her time as a Steelworker committed to safety. She worked at Alcoa Davenport Works (now Arconic) as the first woman to operate the CNC Mills in her department and later trained on the trucks and overhead cranes. She also became a safety rep and would go on to train the whole plant. Bonnie was also active in Women of Steel and Rapid Response, serving as the coordinator for both until her retirement in 2009, but not before forming SOAR Chapter 11-4.

BONNIE CAREY

SOAR
CHAPTER 11-4



District 7 USW Local 1014 Officers Join SOAR



Pictured are local officers and leaders of USW Local 1014 and its SOAR Chapter 31-14 in Gary, Indiana. The union officers have all signed up to be members of the local's SOAR chapter. This photo illustrates the importance of the change in our SOAR Articles of Association and Bylaws that allow active members age 45 or older to join SOAR.

All around, this strengthens us both. It helps put more feet on the ground for picket lines, demonstrations, community service projects, and so much more. It unites us in actively supporting pro-labor candidates in elections. It strengthens us in participating in local and national labor federations. And, in these and other ways, it helps strengthen the whole labor movement. Solidarity Forever!

Scott Marshall, SOAR Vice President

What the U.S. Navy Taught Me

You only need two tools in life: WD-40 and duct tape. If it doesn't move and should, use WD-40. If it shouldn't move and does, use the duct tape.

Charlie

Keep Up With Technology

Each of us has access to the internet and are paying for it through our taxes. I'm referring to computers maintained at your public library. I know that keeping up with new technology is sometimes a pain in the butt, but let's face it, times - they are a changing. Let's not get so far behind with these changes that we someday wake up and realize that we can't even purchase a loaf of bread, or fill up our car with gasoline unless we have internet access. My own Father-in-law, at 99 years old, used the internet daily to keep up with the news of what was happening in the world and to communicate by email.

Charlie


Safety Lesson

I'm sure you're all familiar with those rumble strips on the side of the road used to save lives and to prevent injuries, lifetime disabilities, property and cargo? Well, a few years ago, Elaine and I were traveling home at night and I was the one driving. Although I was tired, I didn't feel the need to have Elaine take over. Not long after, off the road we went! I fell asleep behind the wheel! Those rumble strips, along with a holler from Elaine, got us back on the road just in the nick of time. Today, I am here to testify that those rumble strips really do work to wake up sleeping drivers. With all this being said...now, the rest of the story:

In researching SOAR board member profiles, I discovered that the original idea for those life savers came from our own, Ken Kovack, former SOAR Legislative Director. Before Ken retired, the Dept. of Transportation Highway Administration put out a call asking for ideas on how to make highways safer. The Consumer Federation of America asked Ken if he had any ideas. Ken suggested rumble strips on the sides of highways and pursued this with members of the House Public Works Committee...and that's how we got rumble strips. Thanks, Ken, and may you rest in peace.


Charlie

TRAILBLAZING WOMEN



Mary found purpose in the union when she was hired at Mapa Pioneer, represented by the United Rubber Workers before merging with the USW. She was one of the first Women of Steel from District 1 to attend training at Linden Hall and became the first woman elected president of Local 804L. She would go on to run for local politics and graduate from college. Now, she serves as an active retiree and continues advocating for workers to have a voice and for greedy companies to be held accountable.

MARY FLEURE SOAR – DISTRICT 1
AT LARGE



President Biden Addresses Retirees' Needs at State of the Union



The following statement was issued by Richard Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance for Retired Americans, following President Joe Biden's State of the Union address on March 1:

“President Biden had seniors’ interests at the top of his priorities list during his State of the Union address.

“Noting that Americans pay the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs, he continued to push for allowing Medicare to negotiate drug prices, as the Veterans Administration and Medicaid programs do. Capping the cost of insulin at \$35 per month will also be a welcome and necessary change. Congress should direct Medicare to take the \$450 billion in savings from drug negotiations savings and use it to expand benefits for vision, dental and hearing. (See Editor’s Note below.)

“As of December 2021, legislators in 19 states have enacted 34 laws with provisions that severely restrict voting access. As President Biden said, Congress must pass the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act to ensure that seniors’ voices are heard at the ballot box.

“We also fully support President Biden’s call for higher standards for nursing homes, including providing a sufficient number of staff who are adequately trained to provide high-quality care, and withholding taxpayer dollars from poorly performing facilities that offer improper and unsafe care.

“President Biden is all too aware that several measures have stalled in the Senate after House passage. That is why he called for passing the PRO Act, which will allow workers to join a union without facing corporations’ unnecessary impediments, and for increasing the minimum wage to \$15 per hour, which would mean higher Social Security benefits for seniors upon retirement.

“The House has already passed bills that would lower prescription drug prices, protect voting rights, make the PRO Act the law of the land and raise the minimum wage. We call on the U.S. Senate to listen to President Biden and follow suit.”

Editor’s note: In mid-January, the House of Representatives passed the John R. Lewis Act, which merged the John Lewis Voting Rights Act and the Freedom to Vote Act. However, the voting rights legislation died on the U.S. Senate floor, after Democratic Senators failed to persuade Senate Republicans, and two within their own caucus, to change Senate rules in order to bring forward for consideration without being blocked by a Republican filibuster.

You squander your health, in search of wealth, you sweat, you toil, you save. Then you spend all your wealth in search of health, only to make way to the grave. - Mike Henning

Even Senator McConnell Reprimands Senator Rick Scott over Radical Social Security, Medicare Proposals

by Robert Roach, Jr.



Recently, in a rare public admonishment of one of his top lieutenants, Senate GOP Leader Mitch McConnell (KY) rebuked Senator Rick Scott's (FL) plan that “sunsets” Social Security and Medicare within five years. Sunsetting is a legal provision under which a program is automatically terminated at the end of a fixed period unless renewed by legislative action.

If the proposal sounds extreme and dangerous, it should.

Scott is the chairman of the National Republican Senate Committee, which is in charge of developing Republican strategy and recruiting candidates to take back the Senate.

His plan should serve as a warning about what the agenda for Social Security and Medicare could look like if the GOP retakes the Senate in November. No wonder the plan is endorsed by former GOP House Speaker Newt Gingrich, who advocated for Medicare to ‘wither on the vine’ back in the 1990s.

Senator Scott’s so-called 11-point Rescue America Plan would sunset all federal programs after five years. The plan also includes voter suppression proposals similar to those that several states have already enacted.

In addition, the proposal includes a tax system under which those who don’t pay federal income taxes because they don’t make enough money would have to start paying. About a week after the plan became public, the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy published a report that found, under Senator Scott’s vision, most of the tax increases “would be paid by the poorest 40 percent of Americans.”

While Majority Leader McConnell is not currently voicing his support for Senator Scott’s plan, it would be wise to consider what is clearly on some senators’ wish list if Republicans take control of one or both chambers of Congress after the midterm elections.

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.

“No man’s life, liberty, or property is safe while the legislature is in session.”

-Mark Twain (1866)

SOAR Chapter Resolutions

The **Thirteenth International SOAR Conference** will be held on **Friday and Saturday, August 5-6, 2022.**

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. **(This year all resolutions must be received in the SOAR office in Pittsburgh by June 1, 2022.)** 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
Attn. Julie Stein, Director
60 Blvd. of the Allies - 11th Floor
Pittsburgh, PA 15222**

If you have any questions, please contact the SOAR Office at SOAR's toll-free number: (866) 208-4420


See next page for example of format for content and drafting resolutions. 

TRAILBLAZING WOMEN



Before embarking on her well-earned retirement, Linda worked at Local 13702 in Detroit alongside men digging burial graves and maintaining cemetery grounds. She served as president of the amalgamated local, which consisted of 18 units, for several terms. Then, in 1999, at the USW 29th Constitutional Convention, Linda became one of the first two women to serve as tellers for the election of International officers. She's been involved in the Women of Steel program since its inception and has mentored countless women in Michigan and Wisconsin over the years, even as a retiree.

LINDA LUCAS LOCAL 13702



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

Please use for reference, as needed

Resolution for Consideration at the 2022 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 2022 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

Name, President

Name, Recording Secretary

Date: _____

Date: _____

How Prior Authorization Requirements in Medicare Advantage Could Threaten Your Health



If you're in a Medicare Advantage plan and have needed any costly care, you likely know about prior authorization requirements that save corporate health insurers money but can threaten people's health and well-being. Doctors say that many of these requirements are not evidence-based but, somehow, they are allowed. In an opinion piece for the [AMA News](#), Gerald Harmon, MD, President of the AMA, describes how prior authorization "administrative hassles" could threaten your health.

People in traditional Medicare do not have to deal with prior authorization requirements in order to get the care they need. If their doctor recommends a test or a specialty service, Medicare pays. In stark contrast, Medicare Advantage plans impose prior authorization requirements in a variety of situations, [often harming patient health](#). AMA doctors surveyed reported incidents of preventable "hospitalization, disability and permanent bodily damage, or death" for patients they care for as a result of prior authorization requirements.

Dr. Harmon writes about his attempt to get prior authorization for his 92-year old mother, which kept her from getting important drugs for an unknown period of time. He spent an hour trying to expedite approval of his mom's prescriptions with no success. After trying to get help from a variety of folks, he turned to his mom's doctor who took over the effort to get his mom the drugs she needed.

Even with help from his mom's doctor, there was no guarantee his mom's insurer would authorize her drugs for several days. In turn, Dr. Harmon was deeply concerned about the deleterious effects on his mom's health of not having needed medications. Note: Dr. Harmon was not concerned about drug copays—another enormous barrier to care—that leads to [thousands of unnecessary deaths](#) of people with Medicare each year.

The AMA has an initiative to "fix" prior authorization requirements. For sure, prior authorization should either be eliminated or restricted to specific evidence-based situations when certain treatments might not be warranted. They should never prevent patients from getting timely access to needed care.

The AMA supports bi-partisan legislation in Congress that would help people in Medicare Advantage plans, the Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act of 2021 (H.R. 3173/S.3018). It wouldn't eliminate prior authorization, but it would simplify and standardize it.

If you have stories about how prior authorization in Medicare Advantage kept you or someone you love from getting needed care, please send them to info@justcareusa.org.

Written by Diane Archer of jus+care <https://justcareusa.org>

Level The Playing Field Act 2.0



Policymakers on Capitol Hill are currently working to pass the Bipartisan Innovation Act, which aims to strengthen our economy and help the U.S. compete globally by reshoring supply chains and making more things in America, like semiconductors.



As they make strategic investments, lawmakers also must take steps to ensure that American manufacturers and workers have the trade tools they need to compete against countries like China, which has used unfair trade practices to dominate global industries. This trade cheating led to millions of lost U.S. jobs and, as we learned during the pandemic, made the U.S. overly reliant on imports for our critical goods.

Fortunately, the House of Representatives version of the legislation includes something called the Level the Playing Field Act 2.0, which would modernize America's trade remedy laws to keep up with the unfair trade practices deployed by China and other foreign competitors. But, despite staunch support, the U.S. Senate version does not include this important language.

America's workers and manufacturers are ready and willing to compete against anyone on the planet. But we must make sure everyone follows the rules and give our companies and workers the best tools in the toolbox to take on trade cheaters.

We at the Alliance for American Manufacturing ask you to please tell your Members of Congress to support the inclusion of the Level the Playing Field Act 2.0 in the final version of the Bipartisan Innovation Act. You can contact your Members of Congress at their district offices or by calling the Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121 where you will be connected to their Washington, D.C. office.

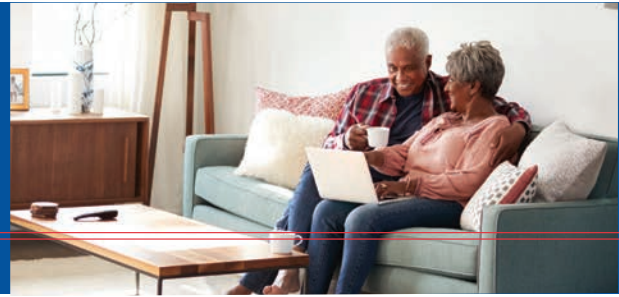
Jeff Bonior, Jeff is Staff writer at the Alliance for American Manufacturing





FACT SHEET

JANUARY 2022



Social Security and Medicare: Current Facts and Figures

The Many Faces of Social Security

- Nearly 176 million workers contribute to Social Security through payroll taxes.
- Nearly 65.2 million people receive monthly Social Security benefits:
 - 50.1 million people receive retirement benefits
 - 5.9 million people receive survivors' benefits
 - 9.2 million people receive disability benefits.

Average 2022 Monthly Social Security Benefit

- A retired worker: \$1,657
- A retired couple: \$2,753
- Disabled worker: \$1,358
- Disabled worker with spouse and child: \$2,383
- Widow or widower: \$1,553
- Young widow or widower with two children: \$3,187
- Maximum Monthly Social Security Benefit: \$3,345 (for worker retiring at Full Retirement Age).

Social Security Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for 2022: 5.9%

2022 Social Security and Medicare Contribution Amounts

Social Security: 6.2% for both workers and employers. This contribution is paid on earnings up to \$147,000.

Medicare: 1.45% for both workers and employers on all wages.

2022 Social Security Eligibility

Full Retirement Age: Depends on your birth year. [Normal retirement age \(NRA\) \(ssa.gov\)](https://www.ssa.gov/normalretirementage/)

Early Retirement Age: 62 (taking early retirement can reduce Social Security benefits up to 30 percent)

Social Security: When and How to Apply for Benefits

Generally, you should apply for Social Security benefits four months before the date you want your benefits to begin. Click here for more information on when you can apply for Social Security: <https://www.ssa.gov/planners/retire/>. You can apply in one of the following ways:

- Visit your local Social Security office. Call 1-800-772-1213 to find the nearest office.
- Call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, you can call Social Security at TTY 1-800-325-0778.
- Online: <https://secure.ssa.gov/iClaim/rib>

Just Some Food for Thought

Elaine and I weren't talking to each other.

I had a dentist appointment the next day and thought I'd try to break the ice; so, before bed time I wrote on a piece of paper, "Please wake me at 7am so I can get to the dentist on time.

The next morning, I woke up late for my appointment...I noticed a piece of paper which said, "It's 7am... wake up."

My wild oats have turned into prunes and All-Bran.



Benjamin Franklin at the signing of the Declaration of Independence:

"We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately."

No doubt about it, this virus is still with us. We all must stay healthy, active and of course, alive. The Worldometer for the United States as of March 28 was:

Coronavirus Cases:

81,620,888

Deaths:

1,003,467

Recovered:

64,457,026

Source: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/us/>

"Whether seventy or sixteen, there is in every being's heart the love of wonder, the sweet amazement at the stars and the star like things and thought, the undaunted challenge of event, the unfailing childlike appetite for what's next, and the joy and the game of life."

-Anonymous

Pray for Peace!

