

Protect Our Democracy Time to Get Out the Vote

The November 8, 2016 election, beyond a doubt, is the most important election of our lifetime. If Republicans win, our democracy will suffer a huge blow and untold harm will be done to the health and security of retirees.

The key focus will be on the presidential race. The next United States President and the U. S. Senate will determine the makeup of the Supreme Court for decades to come. Donald Trump has promised to appoint extreme reactionaries to the bench.

Democrats are working hard to regain control of the United States Senate and make inroads in the United States House of Representatives. At the state level, friends of labor unions and middle class Michiganders stand a good chance of winning a majority in the House.

As seniors, we must vote for those who will protect our healthcare and ensure the rights of all workers to form unions and collectively bargain.

- 1 Get Out The Vote November 8, 2016
- 2 What Voters Need to Know
- 3 Dick Long : No More Retirement Scare Tactics
- 4 TPP Remains a Threat

**Seniors
Make Your Vote Count
November 8, 2016**

What Voters Need to Know November 8, 2016

You must have been registered to vote at least 30 days before the election.

It is not necessary to bring your photo I.D., but it will speed up the process to be issued a ballot.

You can vote a straight party ticket.

You can beat the long line on election day if you get an absentee ballot. To be get an absentee ballot you must meet one of the following criteria:

- ✓ Be at least 60 years old.
- ✓ Be physically unable to attend the polls without assistance.
- ✓ Be an appointed election inspector.
- ✓ Be expected to be absent from the community between 7:00 am and 8:00 pm on Election Day.
- ✓ Be unable to attend due to religious tenets.
- ✓ Be unable to attend because of confinement to jail awaiting arraignment or trial.

Absentee ballots are available at your county clerk offices.

“Choose a leader who will invest in building bridges, not walls. Morality, not corruption. Intellectualism and wisdom, not ignorance. Stability, not fear and terror. ... Character, not immaturity. Transparency, not secrecy. Justice, not lawlessness. ... Truth, not lies.”

--Suzy Kassem Rise up and Salute the Sun.

Dick Long: Time to Stop Playing Games and Using Scare Tactics with Our Retirement

The following selection is from an Op-Ed article written by MIARA President Dick Long. This article first appeared in the Macomb Daily Newspaper.

Michiganders who work their entire lives to support their families deserve a secure retirement. And frankly, seniors are tired of their future being used as leverage buy wannabe elected officials who want to scare others into cutting our benefits.

Unfortunately, because of the rising costs of health care and the recent Republican taxation of Michiganders' retirement benefits, many seniors struggle to get by on their fixed incomes – especially if they're relying solely on social security.

That's why I was dismayed – but not surprised – when I heard that Macomb County's Steve Marino, a current lobbyist who is running as a Republican for the Michigan House of Representatives, told seniors that he wanted to raise the retirement age from 65 to 75.

I'm 71 years old. I worked at General Motors in Pontiac for 47 years. I remember when I started and was told that Social Security wouldn't be available to me because the fund would dry up. That turned out to be a fallacy. It is time for people to stop playing games and using scare tactics with what we've worked our whole lives to achieve.

We've heard this line from Republicans time and time again. While they hand their wealthy corporation donors sweetheart deals, they chip away at our livelihoods to pay for them. Whether it is privatizing Social Security and Medicaid or, like Marino and others have proposed, raising the retirement age, it all boils down to having the wrong priorities.

It's not just raising the retirement age that has folks concerned. Governor Rick Snyder wants to privatize mental health services in Michigan. We saw what happened when the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans was privatized: quality care went out the door and abuse and neglect were rampant.

Additionally, Republicans are now gambling with Michigan's Medicaid funding. Because conservative elected officials are hell-bent on slowing the progress of the Affordable Care Act, they risk throwing away millions in federal funding that would go to provide health care services for low-income and senior Michiganders.

We cannot continually allow the services that we all rely on and have paid into our whole lives to be on the chopping block every legislative cycle. We need to stand up and protect the services that allow people the opportunity to have quality health care and a secure retirement.

Seniors and working families have paid enough already. It's time for our elected officials to make sure everyone is paying their fair share.

Michigan Republicans chose to pay for their unaccountable \$1.8 billion tax cut for big business back in 2011 by taxing seniors' retirement. Now, raising the retirement age on top of that hit to our incomes would be disastrous for seniors across our state. Corporations get billions in our tax dollars every year, meanwhile they expect seniors and working families to pick up the check.

Seniors have had to make some tough choices their entire lives to pay the bills and provide for their families future. Raising the retirement age is just one more hurdle to a fruitful retirement.

Someone who wants to do away with seniors' hard-earned benefits has the wrong priorities. Republicans across the board had better learn that lesson quickly and get right on the issues that matter to seniors.

MiARA Joins with the National Alliance in Support of Clinton-Kaine

Citing her commitment to expand Social Security, strengthen Medicare, and rein in prescription drug prices, the Executive Board of the Alliance for Retired Americans voted to endorse Hillary Clinton for President of the United States.

Robert Roach, Jr., President of the ARA, stated, “No one has been more ready to provide seniors with what they need on day one.” As president, Hillary Clinton will protect our traditional pension plans from attack. “She will stop the proposed TPP Trade Agreement before it locks in patent protections and makes it more difficult for the federal Government to reduce prescription costs in public programs like Medicare.”

Alliance Secretary-Treasurer Joseph Peters said, “Secretary Clinton has our full support as she will protect the rights and interests of older Americans.” Peters went on to say, “She has an unmatched record of public service and has earned a lifetime score of 100 percent from the Alliance for her pro-retiree votes as a U. S. Senator.

In addition to the endorsement of the Clinton-Kaine ticket, the Michigan Alliance has endorsed Victoria Valentine for Circuit Court in Oakland County and Todd Fox for the 51st District Court in Waterford.

To see a complete list of endorsed candidates, consult your local union’s website.

The following unions are MiARA members:

Michigan Education Association;
United Auto Workers- International;
United Steel Workers;
American Federation of Teachers-Michigan;
American Postal Workers Union;
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

Trans-Pacific Partnership Remains a Threat

While Hillary Clinton has vowed to reject the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal, it is still on the table. Alliance members must continue to let President Obama know that TPP is not good for American labor and it is not good for seniors.

The TPP will cost American workers hundreds of thousands of jobs. It will increase the price of prescription drugs for seniors. And, it is an outright attack on our national sovereignty. The agreement usurps the legislative authority of Congress by writing rules concerning the safety and labeling of foods, access to health care and medicine, regulation of banks, rights of workers, future energy sources, and much more.

MiARA members must watch out for the “lame duck” session of Congress. This is the time President Obama and members of Congress might try to push through the TPP. MiARA members must let their elected officials know that TPP is not good for America, not good for the middle class and harmful to senior citizens.



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