

Grassroots Update

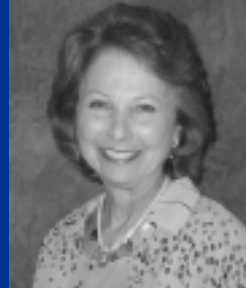
Your National Committee Grassroots Managers and Area Representatives have been conducting outreach sessions throughout the country to educate attendees about our positions on Medicare and Social Security. Some of the recent activities have included the Biennial Conference of the National Indian Council on Aging in Tulsa, OK; United Seniors of Maryland Federal Rally in Washington, D.C., and a Conference on Aging in Oregon. Additionally, legislative updates for the public have been held in Pennsylvania, Ohio,

Georgia, Florida, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Iowa, Montana, Missouri, Minnesota, North Dakota, and New Jersey. Would you like to know if a National Committee Representative is coming to your area? Is your organization hosting a meeting and would like a presentation? Or, would you like to find out how you could become a volunteer? Contact the Grassroots Department at 1-800-998-0181 and ask to speak with your state manager.

NCPSSM Grassroots



▲ Grassroots Director, Sue Ward



▲ Laura Feldman



▲ John Glaser



▲ Katie Johnson



▲ Jan Witt

Call NCPSSM toll free at 1-800-966-1935.

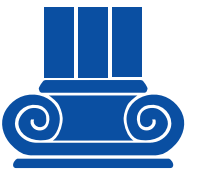
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- President's Message
- Member Corner
- Ask Mary Jane

In this issue

Winter 2007 Newsletter

National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
 10 G Street, NE, Suite 600
 Washington, DC 20002-4215
 www.ncpssm.org



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Newsletter

Winter 2007

Senior Flash Hotline 1-800-998-0180

Dear Friends,

The political landscape in Washington has certainly changed since my last letter to you, our National Committee members. With Democratic majorities in both the House and Senate, there's a new agenda on Capitol Hill with new leadership and legislative priorities.

But what's really going to happen with Social Security and Medicare given this new dynamic in Washington? Unfortunately, efforts to continue the privatization of Medicare and begin the privatization of Social Security still threaten both programs. President Bush, private account supporters in Congress, and industry lobbyists have not given up. If anything, they're working even harder to find new ways to move their agenda forward.

On the issue of Social Security, the President says "everything should be on the table." In other words, the same private accounts plan already rejected by the majority of Americans and members of Congress in both parties will once again be a part of the discussion of Social Security solvency. This is in spite of the fact that private accounts only worsen the program's long-term solvency, increase our national debt, and would ultimately lead to benefit cuts.



If we've learned anything in the past two years, it is that this President is more willing to revamp his message and change messengers than change his philosophy. The Administration's point-man on Social Security, Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, promises "no preconditions" and "everything's on the table." But what does that really mean?

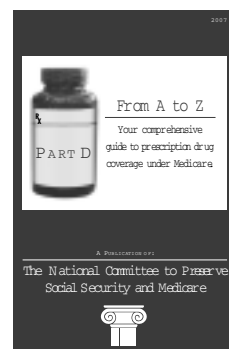
"No preconditions," Paulson said, means both sides get a chance to put their ideas on the table. In regard to Social Security, administration officials said that means President Bush will continue to advocate that younger workers be allowed to divert a portion of their Social Security taxes into private retirement accounts, a proposal Congress roundly rejected last year." Washington Post, 11/21/06.

You, our 4.6 million National Committee members and supporters, understand the critical role Medicare and Social Security play in the lives of millions of seniors, the disabled, survivors, and their families. You've sent thousands of letters to Washington, called your representatives, and raised your collective voices against privatization schemes that undermine these programs so vital to your lives. I thank you.

However, our work is not done. Together we will continue to be vigilant and push Congress towards realistic and long-term solutions to the skyrocketing costs of health care, long-term solvency for Social Security and Medicare, and the reduction of our national debt.

Barbara B. Kennelly

Frequently Asked Questions About Medicare Part D



The 2007 plan year for Medicare Part D is underway and many beneficiaries will likely encounter unforeseen problems with their drug plan's coverage resulting in higher costs, new formularies, even changes in pharmacies where prescriptions can be filled. While the National Committee continues to lobby Congress for

corrections to the flawed Medicare law to improve the quality of coverage for beneficiaries, we also want our members to understand how the current program works. For this reason, we have updated our Frequently Asked Questions about Part D, a booklet available free of charge to members by calling 1-800-966-1935. The information is also available on our website at www.ncpssm.org. Listed on the following page are samples of information provided in the booklet:

(continued on page 2)

Q. Where do I go to appeal a decision by my plan not to cover a needed drug?

A. When you are unable to get needed medication, you should contact your plan and request a coverage determination. You, your appointed representative, or your doctor can request a coverage determination by phone or letter. The plan then has 72 hours to respond to your request (24 hours for an expedited appeal). Plans are expected to provide temporary supplies of non-covered drugs to affected beneficiaries when a plan is unable to meet the imposed timeframes for coverage determinations, redeterminations, or in forwarding cases to the Independent Review Entity. If you disagree with the outcome of coverage determination, there are several levels of appeals that can help you obtain your medication.

Q. What if I buy my prescription drugs from Canada?

A. A new law recently passed by Congress and signed by the President allows individuals to carry up to a 90-day personal supply of prescription drugs across the Canadian border. Although mail order and Internet purchases of prescription drugs from Canada or other countries continues to be illegal, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection has announced it would stop seizing personal shipments of prescription drugs from Canada. Regardless, none of the money you may spend purchasing prescription drugs from abroad will count toward any out-of-pocket limits under Part D.

Q. Can I use a pharmacy outside my plan's network?

A. Under limited circumstances, you may be allowed to use a pharmacy that is not part of your plan's network. This exception cannot be used on a regular basis, and you will need to show that you cannot reasonably get the necessary drugs from a pharmacy that is in your network — for example, if you need an emergency prescription when you are traveling outside your plan's service area. You may be required to pay more for drugs purchased at an out-of-network pharmacy, and the plan may also require you to pay for the prescription yourself at the pharmacy and file for a reimbursement.

Ask Mary Jane



Q. Do pension offsets apply only to federal government pensions or also to state, county, and city pensions?

A. The Government Pension Offset of spouse and widow benefits applies to any public employment that was not covered by Social Security. The pension received could be from local, state, or federal employment.

The Windfall Elimination Provision that reduces an individual's own Social Security if he or she also earned an annuity from non-Social Security employment applies to any employment that was not covered by Social Security. That includes employment by international organizations located in this country and/or work outside the United States.

Q. My M.D. says that I will become disabled by my rheumatoid arthritis. It's just a matter of time. Will a pension from my employer preclude me from receiving Social Security disability benefits?

A. There is no cap on combined pension and Social Security Disability Insurance benefits or on pension and retirement benefits. Social Security is supposed to be complemented by pension benefits and other retirement savings.

The Social Security Act does have a cap on the combination of Social Security Disability benefits and Workers Compensation. Social Security is reduced if the combined benefits from Social Security and Workers Compensation exceed 80 percent of pre-disability earnings. The cap is removed at full retirement age when Disability Insurance benefits are automatically converted to retirement benefits.

The Wall Street Journal has recognized the National Committee's Ask Mary Jane as "the best source of help for questions about Social Security." Send your questions to NCPSSM Senior Policy Analyst Mary Jane Yarrington at NCPSSM, 10 G Street, NE, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20002-4215, or via email to maryjane@ncpssm.org.

the Hill in coordination with the House or Senate. We often time a petition delivery to coincide with pending legislation in order to influence Member opinions and votes. Here are photos of these activities so that you can see your member responses at work.

Is the National Committee ever in the news? The National Committee is regularly seen and heard in the press and on television throughout the country. Recently, NCPSSM President Barbara Kennelly was a guest on CNBC's Power Lunch to discuss Medicare price negotiation. And reporters for papers such as *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, and others frequently contact the National Committee for commentary. We also participate in local and syndicated radio talk shows that are broadcast in markets around the country and on the Internet.



▲ The press covers National Committee petition deliveries such as this one with Senator Harry Reid, now Senate Majority Leader, shown with NCPSSM President Barbara Kennelly.

What do you do with the letters and petitions I sign? The letters and petitions are handled in two ways. Blue letters are collected and sorted at a mail center and then delivered to all Members' offices at the same time. Petitions are collected and then delivered during scheduled press events on

Member Corner

What's on your mind? We read every letter and email that you send to us. It reinforces what we're doing right and helps us know where we need to make adjustments. Here are answers to two of the questions you have asked us:



▲ Thousands of blue letters are sorted and boxed, ready for delivery to Member offices on Capitol Hill.



2007 BOARD OF DIRECTORS BALLOT



As set forth in National Committee by-laws, board members initially are recommended by a nominating committee. They are approved by the full board of directors and then require ratification by the full, current membership. Below is a biographical sketch of each candidate.

Please complete and sign your ballot, detach along the dotted line, and return to the National Committee in time for it to be received no later than midnight, March 03, 2007.*

**NCPSSM Board Ballot
10 G Street, NE, Suite #600
Washington, DC 20002-4215**

*Ballots received after this date cannot be tabulated. Results will be announced in the next issue of the *Newsletter*.

INSTRUCTIONS: To vote, please check the appropriate box(es) below. If you approve of the entire slate of nominees, check Box 1. If you wish to vote only for a specific nominee(s), check Box 2 and the box(es) next to the nominee(s) of your choice. To write in a candidate, check Box 3 and complete the required information. Then sign, detach, and mail your ballot to the above address.

1. I agree with and vote for every candidate recommended for the National Committee Board of Directors.

2. I vote only for:

Carolyn W. Colvin seeks election to a three-year term. Ms. Colvin recently served as the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services for Montgomery County, Maryland. In this capacity, she managed the following service areas: Aging and Disability Services; Behavioral Health and Crisis Services; Children, Youth, and Family Services; Public Health Services; the Office of Special Needs Housing; and the Office of Community Outreach. Prior to her appointment to the Department of Health and Human Services, Ms. Colvin was the Director of the District of Columbia's Department of Human Services. Ms. Colvin served in the Social Security Administration as Deputy Commissioner for Operations and Deputy Commissioner for Programs and Policy. Ms. Colvin resides in Olney, Maryland.

Mitchell Kaplan seeks election to a three-year term. Mitchell Kaplan is a founder of the Kaplan-Stahler-Gumer-Braun Agency, a boutique literary agency that handles a diverse group of clients from motion picture writers to reality TV producers. Mr. Kaplan is a graduate of the NYU School of Commerce. He also served in the U.S. Air Force and the New York Air National Guard. Mr. Kaplan is actively involved in many organizations. He is a founding member of the Chairman's Leadership Group of the NAACP. Mr. Kaplan serves on the boards of the Alliance for Children's Rights, the National Committee for an Effective Congress, and 21st Century Democrats. Mr. Kaplan resides in Beverly Hills, California.

Hans Riemer seeks election to a three-year term. Hans Riemer is the Political and Issues Director for Rock the Vote, the Los Angeles based nonprofit organization dedicated to building political power for young people. From 2001-2003, Mr. Riemer was a senior policy analyst directing the Social Security Information Project at the Institute for America's Future, a progressive research and advocacy organization. While there, he ran a national coalition of organizations dedicated to protecting Social Security. From 1996-2001, Mr. Riemer was the director of the 2030 Center, a public policy organization for young adults focused on economic issues and particularly Social Security, which he founded at the age of 23. Mr. Riemer resides in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Paul S. Nathanson, Esq. seeks re-election to a one-year term. Mr. Nathanson joined the Board of Directors in 1998 and served as Chair from 2002-2005. Recently, he was the Director of the Institute of Public Law and a member of the faculty of the University of New Mexico School of Law. He is founding director of the National Senior Citizens Law Center and founding member of the ABA Commission on legal problems of the elderly. He has served as co-chair of the UNM Center for Aging Research, Education and Service (UNMCARES) and Chair of the New Mexico Association of Geriatric Education (NMAGE). Mr. Nathanson resides in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

3. I vote only for: _____
Name of write-in

instead of: _____
Name of nominee from list above

Your Signature (required): _____
Member, NCPSSM