

# FRIDAY ALERT



**Alliance for Retired Americans**

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## **Alliance's 2008 Voting Record Shows Congress is Becoming More Pro-Senior**

On Monday, the Alliance released a new report detailing the voting record of every U.S. Senator and Representative on key issues affecting current and future retirees. "The 2008 voting record showed a continuation of a pro-senior trend in America, one which began with the 2006 midterm elections and culminated with the historic elections of 2008," said Alliance President **Barbara J. Easterling**. "Higher scores show a commitment to improve health care, strengthen Medicare, and put seniors ahead of drug and insurance companies," Easterling added. The Alliance voting record examines 10 key Senate votes and 10 key House votes in 2008, showing the roll calls on issues such as stopping Social Security privatization and fully funding the low-income energy assistance program. Several votes addressed Medicare, including overriding then-President Bush's veto of a Medicare bill that made improvements to the program.

According to the research, 259 U.S. House members received passing grades (higher than 60 percent), with 197 achieving perfect scores of 100 percent. 175 received failing grades (60 percent or lower), with 14 receiving scores of zero. One seat was vacant during these votes. In the Senate, 58 members received passing grades (higher than 60 percent), with 47 achieving perfect scores of 100 percent. 42 received failing grades (60 percent or lower), with only **Sen. Jim Bunning** (R-KY) receiving a score of zero. President **Barack Obama**, a senator last year, received a perfect score, participating in seven of the votes scored by the Alliance in 2008 despite the rigors of the campaign trail. His opponent in the 2008 presidential general election, Senator **John McCain**, missed all ten of the votes evaluated by the Alliance in 2008. Unlike in recent years, senior advocates now see a reason to believe that positive change can be voted on by a senior-friendly Congress and passed into law by a senior-friendly president. "The voting record tells seniors and those who follow senior issues who our friends are in Congress," Easterling said. "It is a powerful educational tool that keeps our elected officials on their toes." To view the voting record, go to <http://www.retiredamericans.org/ht/display/ArticleDetails/i/12528/pid/381>.

## **Older Americans Month Continues with a Focus on Long Term Care**

May is Older Americans Month, and all month long the Alliance is drawing attention to retirees' stake in the health care debate. Last week, Alliance activists wrote Letters to the Editor and contacted their members of Congress about allowing Americans 55-64 years old to buy into Medicare; improving the Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit; and financing a public health care plan. Week two of Older Americans Month kicks off on Monday, with a theme for the week of "Long Term Care and the CLASS (Community Living Assistance Services and Supports) Act." For more information, including fact sheets and what you can do to participate, go to <http://www.retiredamericans.org/ht/d/sp/i/12770/pid/12770>. "Thank you to all Alliance members who have worked on this effort," said **Edward F. Coyle**, Executive Director of the Alliance.

## **Older Women's League To Release Elder Abuse Report on Mother's Day**

Anywhere from 500,000 to 5 million individuals suffer from the effects of abuse, neglect or financial exploitation in a given year, and women are two-thirds of the victims. This Mother's Day, OWL - The Voice of Midlife and Older Women - is highlighting the atrocity of elder abuse by releasing a report entitled, *Elder Abuse: A Women's Issue*. OWL will also be hosting a Capitol Hill policy briefing on the issue on Tuesday. The report covers issues ranging from elder abuse from a feminist perspective to the role of overmedication in elder abuse. "This Mother's Day, OWL's goals are to first, heighten awareness about the abomination that we call elder abuse, and second, to ignite the feminist and aging advocacy grassroots to push together for comprehensive federal abuse protections," stated **Ashley Carson**, Executive Director of OWL. Women have fought to pass adequate legislative abuse protections for children and for the victims and survivors of domestic violence, and OWL believes that women can fight to pass elder abuse protections in 2009. For more information, go to <http://www.owl-national.org/Welcome.html>.

## **No Social Security COLA Expected in 2010**

Social Security recipients could possibly see no cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) next year for the first time in over 30 years, according to press reports based on preliminary analysis by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO). The COLA is meant to ensure benefits rise with consumer prices, but the economic downturn and lower energy prices have led to low inflation over the last year. CBO Director **Douglas Elmendorf** has predicted low inflation for several more years, meaning the possibility of no Social Security COLA increase until January 2013. While approximately three-fourths of Medicare beneficiaries would see no change in their Part B premiums without the adjustment, since Medicare and Social Security increases are linked, not all beneficiaries are covered by such protections.

## **President Obama to Nominate Kathy Greenlee for Aging Post**

Last week, President Obama announced his intent to nominate **Kathy Greenlee** for Assistant Secretary of the Administration on Aging, Department of Health and Human Services. As Secretary of Aging for the state of Kansas since January 2006, Greenlee has been responsible for overseeing the state's Older Americans Act programs, distribution of Medicaid long-term care payments and regulation of nursing home licensure. "The Alliance is looking forward to working with Assistant Secretary Greenlee to protect Americans' retirement security," said **Ruben Burks**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance.

## **Reminder: 2009 Alliance Legislative Conference is June 15-18, 2009**

The Alliance's 2009 Legislative Conference will be June 15-18, in Washington, DC at the Washington Hilton. Alliance members will have the opportunity to meet with Congressional representatives and Administration officials, organize grassroots activities to improve Medicare and strengthen retirement security, and voice their opinions in breakout sessions. To register, call 1-888-373-6497, go to [www.unionvoice.org/retirees/events/conf\\_2009/details.tcl](http://www.unionvoice.org/retirees/events/conf_2009/details.tcl) or e-mail **Joni Jones** at [jjones@retiredamericans.org](mailto:jjones@retiredamericans.org).