Social Security Defrauded in Shameful 9/11 Scam

The Seniors Coalition and Congress were shocked to learn of another, arguably more abhorrent case of American’s tax dollars being stolen by fraudulent disability claims. The most recent case involves former firefighters, policemen and even a former FBI employee. Sadly these thieves schemed the Social Security Administration (SSA) out of millions of dollars because they claimed their “disability” was caused as a result of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York City. Many had never even worked at Ground Zero.

“I am shocked to learn of yet another episode of Social Security fraud,” reports Executive Director Sean Ferritor, “and it chills me to the bone to find out that these criminals preyed on the pride the American people feel for our first responders and the emotions of that tragic event.”

Following this breaking news, The Seniors Coalition immediately accepted an invitation to attend a Congressional hearing on the matter. The hearing was called by U.S. Congressman Sam Johnson, Chairman of the House Ways and Means Sub-committee on Social Security. The purpose of the hearing was two-fold; to investigate how this fraud could

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TSC Launches 2014 National Guaranteed CoLA Petition Drive

Yet again, another year goes by and Congress continues to ignore the pressing issue of fixing the flawed Cost of Living Adjustment (CoLA) formula. Now senior citizens are out a stunning $2,954 that is missing from their average Social Security “base amount.” This is unacceptable and The Seniors Coalition will continue to press Congress to fix this issue.

Last year, TSC made progress advancing the conversation about CoLA reform. Unfortunately, bigger issues that affect the entire country, like ObamaCare and the Debt Limit battles, drowned out TSC’s efforts. “Last year,” explains Executive Director Sean Ferritor, “our progress advancing this issue was stifled and side-lined by these bigger issues in Congress. Every member of Congress I spoke with last year promised to look into and tackle the issue of CoLA reform, but I could tell they were busy and were putting the issue on

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TSC Launches 2014 National Guaranteed CoULA Petition Drive

the back-burner. This year I will hold them to their word.”

The Seniors Coalition will not give up on CoLA reform! This is a critical issue with a serious financial impact on seniors across the country, and every Seniors Coalition member knows it. That is why The Seniors Coalition will keep pushing the issue and lobbying Congress to act, because every senior we represent deserves no less.

It remains to be seen what form of action Congress will take, but The Seniors Coalition is adamant about three things. First, Congress must correct the errors of previous years and repay seniors their missing CoLAs. Seniors in 2010 and 2011 fell victim to economists’ and statisticians’ charts and figures that erroneously claim that the cost-of-living did not increase. “The way the Bureau of Labor Statistics calculates the yearly CoLA is severely flawed,” explains Assistant Director Owen Thomas. “It does not take into account the goods and services seniors as a group regularly purchase and cannot substitute for another product when the price increases.”

The second issue that must be tackled is the way seniors’ annual CoLAs are calculated. A specific CoLA formula for seniors needs to be used to do this, and it is called the CPI-E, or the consumer price index for the elderly. Lastly, Congress must create a base CoLA rate because, let’s face it, the cost of living will continue to go up even in good years, but in good economic years politicians are tempted to claim that a CoLA is not needed and instead allocate that money for some pet project. Seniors must be protected from unwarranted money grabs by Congress and a guaranteed annual amount is that safety precaution.

The Coalition wants this broken CoLA system fixed, and with every member and supporter standing firm behind it, the politicians on both sides of the aisle would be foolish to stand in the way. The Seniors Coalition is launching its 2014 National Petition Drive to tell Congress that seniors want their CoLAs fixed. Stand with The Seniors Coalition in 2014 and tell your Congressman to do the right thing: Make H.R. 1585 a Law! Make it retroactive to January 2010, get your full and fair CoLA, and get your $2,954 back! ▲

Dear Friend,

2014 is gearing up to be an important year for senior citizens and I am calling on all Seniors Coalition members to stay especially diligent this year.

The President continues to toy with the way your annual CoLAs are calculated. His new Chained CPI method of calculating inflation will be devastating to seniors’ benefits over the course of a few years. The politicians who continue to push this ill-conceived plan will try and ease your fears by showing minimal losses in benefits per year, but will not explain to you how this will hurt you over time.

ObamaCare, which raids $300 billion from the privately run Medicare Advantage program, will force insurance companies to reduce benefits and pull back access to Medicare Advantage enrollees simply to stay in business.

It’s time the President and his Administration realize their out-of-control spending habits over the last six years cannot be swept under the rug, and that saving money on the backs of America’s seniors will not be tolerated.

Dr. Joseph L. Bridges
President & CEO
The Seniors Coalition

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have occurred, and to hold the SSA accountable before Congress and the American people.

According to testimony of Patrick P. O’Carroll, Jr., Inspector General, Social Security Administration, approximately 106 individuals have been indicted, but the investigation is ongoing and there may be more possible suspects. Also testifying was Carolyn W. Colvin, Acting Commissioner, Social Security Administration, who bureaucratically avoided all of Chairman Johnson’s questions regarding accountability in the SSA. When pressed for a simple yes or no answer to address what procedural practices would be implemented to thwart similar cases in the future, Ms. Colvin simply responded, “If you’re looking for a yes or no answer, I can’t answer that.”

To put it into perspective, SSA officials estimate that nearly $22 million dollars was fraudulently stolen from Social Security. “This is truly a sad day,” exclaimed President and CEO Dr. Joseph Bridges, “when criminals find a way to steal tens of millions of dollars from every working American and every retired American who have all been paying into Social Security their entire working lives. I believe there must finally be accountability in the Social Security Administration, and The Seniors Coalition will not rest until those responsible for this mess are brought to justice.” ▲

Legislative Report from Sean Ferritor

As the 2014 Legislative schedule begins to take form, I want to warn all Seniors Coalition members who are enrolled in Medicare Advantage to pay close attention to what I am about to say.

The Affordable Care Act, or ObamaCare as it has been dubbed on Capitol Hill, raids $300 billion dollars from the Medicare Advantage program. You did not read that wrong, that was 300 BILLION, with a B. We all have read and heard about the problems with the rollout of this nationally-hated legislation, but taking much needed funds from a successful program like Medicare Advantage is especially abhorrent.

By now you should all be aware of the dismal rollout of ObamaCare. Enrollment is nowhere near where the President and his Administration boasted it would be. And the biggest lie of all was that if you are happy with your doctor, then you can keep your doctor. The President himself offered a one-year delay on the employer mandate without giving any thought to offering the same courtesy to the average American citizen by delaying the personal mandate. The House of Representatives has passed more than 38 bills that would de-fund or outright repeal Obamacare.

I don’t think there are many people in this country who are excited about being forced by the U.S. Government to purchase any goods or services, continued on page 4
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Legislative Report from Sean Ferritor

but to ram something like this down the throats of Americans is especially undemocratic. Robbing 300 billion dollars from a privately run, successful insurance program seems to be the straw that broke the camel’s back.

Most studies indicate that Medicare Advantage significantly reduced out-of-pocket costs by seniors while providing better benefits, yet the current Administration targeted it anyway. It’s time we all stand together and let the President know that there are ways to cut spending without punishing senior citizens.

That’s all for this month. If you have any questions or comments about our legislative or grassroots lobbying efforts, please don’t hesitate to call me at 202-261-3594.

2014 Membership Renewal Continues

TSC’s 2014 membership drive is still underway.

By renewing your membership now, you can help TSC save much needed funds. Each member who renews their membership early frees up money for grassroots lobbying programs that would otherwise be spent on renewal notices.

Tell Us Why TSC Is Important to You

Many members of The Seniors Coalition have been with us for years. We’d like to hear your stories about why you joined TSC and what TSC means to you. Please send your comments, and a picture of yourself if you have one to spare, to:

Sean Ferritor
The Seniors Coalition
1250 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Suite 200
Washington, D.C. 20036
Or by email to: tsc@senior.org
Or call Sean at 202-261-3594

Help The Seniors Coalition Protect You and Your Rights!

The Seniors Coalition depends exclusively on voluntary membership dues and contributions from the general public to represent America’s senior citizens in Washington. If you would like to help our efforts, then please clip and return this coupon with any contribution you can afford.

☐ YES! I would like to help The Seniors Coalition keep fighting to protect senior citizens. Enclosed is my contribution of:

☐ $10  ☐ $15  ☐ $25  ☐ $50
☐ $100  ☐ $250  ☐ Other $__________

Name: __________________________________________
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Please make your check payable to “TSC”.

Because we lobby Congress on your behalf, contributions are not tax-deductible.

Please send your contribution along with this form to:
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