

# FRIDAY ALERT



**Alliance for Retired Americans**

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## Seniors' Votes May Be the Key to Victory in 2008

Results of the first *Washington Post*-ABC News poll since the Democratic nomination contest ended, published on Tuesday, showed **Sen. John McCain** (R-AZ) leading **Sen. Barack Obama** (D-IL) among all seniors. Among all voters, Sen. Obama is running ahead of Sen. McCain, 48% - 42%. In contrast to the *Washington Post*-ABC numbers, a Reuters/Zogby poll released on Wednesday had the two candidates essentially tied among voters over the age of 65. According to CNN political analyst **Bill Schneider**, "We're going to see an age division in this election bigger than we have usually seen. Older voters have been trending more Republican ever since 1992." Like many of the current polls show, Sen. Obama also did better with younger voters than with seniors during the Democratic primaries. Combined exit polls from the primaries plus the Iowa and Nevada caucuses found that Sen. **Hillary Clinton** (D-NY) won 59% of voters age 65 and older, compared with 34% for Sen. Obama. "Older voters will be crucial in November," said **Edward Coyle**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "If Sen. Obama were to capture the older vote in addition to the other demographics that he currently carries, it would be very difficult for Sen. McCain to catch him."

## Midwest Devastated by Natural Disasters

The Alliance's thoughts are with the victims of the tornadoes and widespread flooding which have struck Iowa and other areas of the Midwest recently. Heavy rain has caused several major Iowa rivers feeding into the Mississippi to flood their banks over the past few weeks; no less than nine of these rivers have already reached record flood levels. Governor **Chet Culver** has declared 83 of the state's 99 counties "disaster areas," and agricultural damage is estimated to be at least \$1 billion. Also in Iowa, four people were killed and another 40 were injured when a tornado hit a Boy Scout camp in the western part of the state. The Federal Emergency Management Agency estimates more than 11 million people around the Midwest will be affected by these natural disasters, as flooding continues down the Mississippi River. "It is difficult times like these that remind us no matter which generation we are a part of, how important it is to band together to help those in need and rebuild our communities," said Iowa native **George J. Kourpias**, President of the Alliance.

## Alliance Executive Board Welcomes New Members

On Tuesday, the Alliance Executive Board held its last meeting before the November general election. Fifteen new board members were recognized, including State Presidents **Kevin Lynch** of Connecticut, **Elmer Blankenship** of Indiana, **Doug Hart** of Arizona, **John Carr** of Maine, **John Newman** of North Carolina, and **Dave Friesner** of Ohio. The group discussed plans to educate and mobilize Alliance members in order to elect a pro-retiree, pro-worker President and increase the strength of seniors on Capitol Hill. The Executive Board also passed a resolution

calling on Congress to hold down energy costs. The resolution calls for Congress to enact legislation that will include taxing the windfall profits of oil and energy companies; funding the Low Income Heating Energy Assistance Program at the authorized level of \$5.1 billion; making it illegal for foreign states to engage in energy cartels; and suspending the acquisition of petroleum for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

### **Alliance Charters its 29<sup>th</sup> State: South Carolina!**

On June 13<sup>th</sup>, the South Carolina Alliance for Retired Americans (SCARA) held its founding convention, with members electing **Pam Creech** and **Julie Harbin** as the Alliance's first Co-Presidents. In addition to Creech and Harbin, convention attendees elected **Jim Campbell** as Executive Vice President, **Lottie Irick** as Secretary and **LeRoy J. Marcotte** as Treasurer. Four Regional Vice Presidents were also elected and include **Sam Breudner**, **Bill McKee**, **B.E. Stevenson** and **Elaine Johnson**. **Judy Cato**, Executive Vice President of the Alliance, and Edward Coyle were on hand to welcome South Carolina into the organization.

### **Florida Board of Medicine Rule Would Increase Patient Costs**

The Florida Alliance has once again stopped a proposal by the Florida Board of Medicine to raise prices for patient copies of medical records, a change that would have dramatically increased the cost for many of the state's retirees to acquire necessary documents. Florida seniors often need many official copies of their medical records, as documentation is required to see specialists, apply for insurance programs and benefits or transition into long term care facilities. On June 5<sup>th</sup>, FLARA President **Tony Fransetta** and Secretary **Barbara DeVane** met with the Board's Rules & Legislative Committee to express their opposition to the proposal and their concern that by increasing costs for those who may be able to afford it least, the action would be detrimental to the health, welfare, and affordability of medical services of all Floridians. The committee agreed to postpone the change, marking the third time FLARA and community partners have been able to stop this increase from taking effect.

### **High Gas Prices Affect Medicare by Raising Ambulance Costs**

The rising cost of gas is causing unforeseen issues in programs such as Medicare - soaring gas prices are increasing costs for ambulance companies who transport Medicare patients. To offset increased gas costs, Sen. **Charles Schumer** (D-NY) introduced legislation to increase Medicare reimbursements for ambulance companies nationwide. Twenty-three senators are co-sponsoring Schumer's bipartisan bill, according to *Long Island Newsday*. "Skyrocketing fuel prices were already affecting seniors on a fixed income," said **Ruben Burks**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "It should not be surprising that it would affect the Medicare program as well."

### **Did You Know...**

Today's newborns have the longest life expectancy in U.S. history, estimated at 78.1 years, up from 77.8 years in 2005 (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).