

*Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.*

*Martin Luther King, Jr.*

About the Alliance:

The Alliance is a unique state/national organization working to protect the health and economic security of seniors, reward work, strengthen families and build thriving communities. Launched in Wisconsin in 2005, it is a coalition of AFL-CIO affiliated unions, retiree groups, and community-based organizations dedicated to economic and social justice.

The Alliance is a voice for retirees and older Americans. Our goal is to educate, energize and mobilize seniors to make a difference through activism. The Alliance fights for:

A strong Social Security system that provides guaranteed benefits & protects families for life.

Health care seniors can depend on through Medicare.

Affordable and accessible prescription drugs.

Strengthening pension laws.

Affordable and accessible long term care

### **Where the Candidates Stand on Social Security**

Leon Burzynski

There are several important issues to be considered during the political campaigns underway for president and congressional seats. I believe Social Security is one of the most important for retirees and those approaching retirement.

First, a review of recent history is in order. You may recall the push to privatize Social Security by both Bush administrations. At the time the right-wing crowd claimed we could do better with our retirement funds invested in Wall Street. Then the market did its great crash, popping the “Better Return” balloon.

The anti-Social Security folks followed with a claim that seniors were stealing from younger generations. However, they did not mention the part about how we had paid into this fund throughout our working lives. Every paycheck, there was a small deduction for Social Security.

Well, the so-called “Social Security Reformers” are back with a new twist. Their new claim is that we retirees are better off than we thought. This is being promoted in a series of articles in prominent news media (Wall Street Journal, Forbes) by Andrew Biggs, of the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative

think tank. This is the same Andrew Biggs who was a deputy commissioner of the Social Security Administration under George W. Bush.

Using the “Fuzzy Math” Republicans are fond of, Biggs claims facts that do not exist. He ignores the reality faced by millions of retirees living on meager savings and pension plans that no longer exist. As noted in a New York Times editorial, **“36 percent of retirees now rely on Social Security for 90 percent of their income...65 percent of retirees rely on it for more than half of their income.”**

Moving to the present campaigns, retirees need to determine the position of the candidates on Social Security. Here is what we know to date.

#### **The Republicans**

**Donald Trump:** Trump, who does not have detailed plans about anything, had said he favored raising the full retirement age to 70. He now says he would keep it at 67 and not increase benefits.

**Ted Cruz:** Cruz favors raising the full retirement age and a reduction in benefits. He also would change the cost-of-living adjustment so payments would be decreased. Finally, he wants to start moving a portion to personal accounts on Wall Street.

#### **Marco Rubio:**

He favors raising the full retirement age, eliminating payroll taxes for older workers, reduced benefits for higher income earners, and eliminating the Social Security earnings test.

**John Kasich:** He has a history on Social Security. He was part of the Bush drive to privatize. He favors extending the full retirement age and reducing benefits. When an audience member in New Hampshire mentioned that a reduction in benefits “would be a problem,” Kasich’s response was “Well, you’d get over it, and you’re going to have to get over it.”

#### **The Democrats (Alphabetically)**

**Hillary Clinton:** She favors increasing benefits and creating a “caregiver credit.” She also favors lifting the payroll tax cap and broadening the taxation base.

**Bernie Sanders:** He favors a general increase in all benefits, including the initial benefit. He supports a higher index for the cost-of-living adjustment. As with Hillary Clinton, he also favors lifting the payroll tax cap and broadening the taxation base.

#### **The Elections**

Since campaign positions change depending on the audience, I urge you to be aware of your candidate’s stance on Social Security.



# The Elections are Coming — Do You Have the Voter ID?

With Credit to: Common Cause in Wisconsin; League of Women Voters of Wisconsin; Our Democracy 2020

## Here's how to Get a Free Voter Photo ID

**Go** to your local Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) service center.

(Find the location of your local DMV at: <http://wisconsin.gov/Pages/online-srvcs/find-dmv>)

**Bring** your **Social Security number** (doesn't have to be your SS Card) and *original* documents that prove your name and date of birth; your identity; U.S. Citizenship; and Wisconsin residency (*see lists below*).

**Fill out** a "Wisconsin Identification Card" application.

## Documents needed to get a Free Voter Photo ID

**Bring one from each of the following four categories (originals, no photo copies).**

Documents in **bold** can be used as proof in more than one category (e.g., Birth Certificate).

*Note: the lists below contain examples of the most common documents – for more information or a complete list of acceptable documents, visit: [www.BringIt.wi.gov/how-do-i-get-free-state-id-card](http://www.BringIt.wi.gov/how-do-i-get-free-state-id-card) or call 1-866-VOTE-WIS Mon-Fri, 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.*

### Name and Date of Birth:

- **Birth Certificate (certified)**
- **Certificate of Citizenship**
- Court Order (Adoption, Divorce, Name or Gender Change)
- **Certificate of Naturalization**

### Proof of U.S. Citizenship:

- **U.S. Birth Certificate (certified)**
- **Certificate of Citizenship**
- **Certificate of Naturalization**

### Proof of Identity:

- Marriage or Divorce Certificate
- Social Security Card
- Driver's License (Other U.S. State)
- State ID Card (Other U.S. State)
- U.S. Gov & Military Dependent Card
- Military Discharge Papers (including Federal DD-214)

Bring **ONE**  
from each  
category!

**Wisconsin Residency** (*must show name and address*):

- Utility Bill (e.g., Cable, Phone)\*
- Bank/Financial Institution Statement\*
- Pay Stub\*
- Insurance Policy dated within last year
- Gov Issued Correspondence issued within the last year
- Mortgage Documents for WI Property

\*Issued within the last 90 days

**If you don't have the required documents** to prove U.S. Citizenship, name and date of birth, and/or legal name change, **you can still get a free ID**, but you must:

Be a U.S. Citizen, indicate that **the ID card is required free of charge for the purposes of voting**; and **fill out a short form** claiming that documents required to prove U.S. Citizenship, name and date of birth and/or legal name change are unavailable and require a fee to a government agency to obtain.

# Interesting Topics to Consider in 2016

Leon Burzynski

## Ryan's Slight-of-Hand

When Congressman Paul Ryan was selected Speaker of the House, many political gurus were claiming he would bring a clear-headed leadership to the riotous bunch that ousted John Boehner. I would suggest they had not reviewed his record in politics.

A recent article by Wayne O'Leary, a Maine writer, noted that Ryan was not the "numbers expert" he claimed to be. In fact, his numbers, on many occasions, failed to add up.

Ryan is the ideologically biased conservative who convinced George W. Bush to privatize Social Security twice, even after the effort failed miserably the first time. Give him credit for persistence.

The part most people miss is that after the first failure, Ryan came back with a new privatization scheme that included phasing out Medicaid and Medicare. His idea was included with the ill-fated *Roadmap for America's Future*.

Ryan's budget proposals, in keeping with his Ayn Rand and Milton Friedman philosophies, were heavy in privatizing Social Security, voucherizing Medicare and Medicaid, tax cuts for the wealthy, and business-friendly trade agreements.

As O'Leary stated, Ryan's new position may mean "Br'er Fox is already in the henhouse."

## Governor Walker's Albatross

Governor Scott Walker, in the course of his first term, has a jobs problem. He fell short in a major-league fashion with his promise of 250,000 jobs in his first term.

His failure would not be so striking if our neighboring states had also mirrored the Wisconsin jobs scene. Alas, the rest of the Midwest states did not follow the script.

Nowhere is it more evident than in Minnesota, our westerly neighbor. Governor Mark Dayton, also elected in 2011, walked an opposite path from Walker.

He raised the state income tax from 7.85 to 9.85 percent on income over \$150,000 for individuals and \$250,00 for couples. He also saw to increasing the Minnesota minimum wage to \$9.50/hour by 2018.

Dayton added 172,000 new jobs, compared to Walker's 129,000 during their first term. Minnesota has the 4th highest top income tax rate in the country and the 5th lowest unemployment rate.

Unlike Walker, Dayton actually made it easier to vote. In place of creating obstacles to voting, his administration created an online voter registration system, so it would be easier to vote.

Surely Walker must wish he did not have such a successful administration to compare to his failures.

## The World of Trump-Latinos

I give Donald Trump credit for one thing; he does not seem to be helping the Republicans. His hostility toward Latinos has carried over to the GOP tanking with Latino voters.

Lynn Vaveck of the New York Times reported that several surveys of Latinos showed the party damaged by comments made by Republican candidates in 2016. Trump led off with his comments, and his competition piled on in agreement.

The polls showed 80 percent of Latinos surveyed had an unfavorable impression of Trump's statements, with 68 percent being "very unfavorable."

## The World of Trump-Unions

Workers in Trump's South Point casino in Las Vegas voted to unionize in December 2015. Trump's hotel management tried to have the results thrown out, but the NLRB saw otherwise.

## The World of Trump-Douthat

Ross Douthat, a New York Times conservative writer, must have had a Trump bad-hair day recently. His column claimed President Obama was responsible for the rise of Trump.

He stated that Obama created the "celebrity presidency," saying he was endorsed by celebrities. Douthat seems to have forgotten about the Reagan presidency, when a movie celebrity became president.

## JOIN THE WISCONSIN ALLIANCE

## RETIREES CAN AND DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

**Our Mission** is to advance public policy that protects the health and economic security of older Americans.

**Our Goal** is to educate, energize, and mobilize retirees to make a difference through activism.

**JOIN** us on the *front line fighting* to preserve **Pensions, Social Security, Medicare**, and issues important to retirees!

Send your membership to: WI Alliance for Retired Americans 6333 W. Bluemound Road Milw., WI 53213

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$20 (\$30/couple) Annual Membership Fee Enclosed      *Additional Donation:* \_\_\_\_\_ \$10 \_\_\_\_\_ \$15 \_\_\_\_\_ \$20 \_\_\_\_\_ \$25





6333 West Bluemound Road  
Milwaukee, WI 53213

## March 2016 Newsletter

### Learn About Our History

Leon Burzynski

Events taking place during political campaigns clearly illustrate how uninformed most citizens are about labor history. They are unable to connect the quality-of-life to the gains made by organized labor.

An enlightening and fact-filled way to learn about our labor history is to support the Wisconsin Labor History Society. To learn more, consider attending the Wisconsin Labor History Annual Conference on Saturday, May 21, 2016.

The conference will be held at the UAW Local 72 Hall, 3615 Washington Road, Kenosha, WI. The theme of the conference this year is: ***A Historical Look at Immigration and Unions: Lessons for Today***. With the wild claims being made by presidential candidates, the topic is certainly appropriate.

Registration starts at 8:30a.m., and the program will be presented from 9:00a.m.—3:00p.m. For reservations go to: <http://wislabor.eventbrite.com>. The 35th Annual Conference will have a bonus special event at 3:30p.m., when, in cooperation with the Illinois Labor History Society, the documentary, "*Brothers on the Line*" will be shown.

More information about the Wisconsin Labor History Society can be found at:

<http://www.wisconsinlaborhistory.org/>

### Get Involved! It's Phone Bank Season!

Leon Burzynski

Come help Joanne Kloppenburg get elected! Talk with other union members about restoring fairness to our court.

**Phone Banks are open every Tuesday  
and Thursday until election day.  
4p.m.—7p.m.**

**Madison Labor Temple  
1602 South Park Street  
Madison, WI 53715**

**WI AFL-CIO  
6333 West Bluemound Road  
Milwaukee, WI 54313**

As we swing into the heart of the spring and fall election seasons, your help is needed. One of the great strengths of the labor movement has been the ability to reach out to voters.

We have provided information materials about the candidates' positions on issues of great importance to not only union members, but also the population at large. For many years we have heard that "*This is the most important election ever!*" With the crazy claims being made today, I suspect this year will be no different.