

# Connection

## Connie's Korner



We need jobs! Workers have been patiently waiting for congress to pass legislation to address the job crisis in this country. The House of Representatives passed H.R. 4212 - American Jobs and Closing Tax Loopholes Act on May 28, 2010. This bill will provide critical tax cuts and support for American workers as many continue to struggle in this difficult economic climate.

Provisions included in the legislation would:

- Promote american job creation
- Provide relief for working families
- Prevent the outsourcing of American jobs
- Close tax loopholes
- Ensure corporate accountability
- Maintain access to affordable health care
- Expand career training programs for Americans who are looking for work, and
- Extend eligibility for unemployment insurance benefits.

Now it is time for the Senate to quit dragging their feet and passed this much needed jobs bill. This bill will create jobs, including summer jobs, close loopholes that give corporations a tax break to send American jobs overseas, and help Americans who lost their jobs through no fault of their own. We can no longer sit back and wait out this recession that has crippled our economy and inflicted financial harm and despair on to millions of working families across the country.

This bill is our way out. Putting Americans back to work will fund Social Security, Medicare and help to reduce our national debt. *Your Senators need to hear from you. Tell them to put America back to work!*

*Connie Entekin*, President



## From The Director's Desk

### Action Needed Now To "Fix" Medicare Doctor Payments

For the fourth time this year, Congress had to act to avert a scheduled 21 percent cut in pay to doctors who treat seniors and others on the Medicare program. A cut of that magnitude would be devastating for Medicare and the patients it serves, however, no one seems to be able to figure out how to solve the problem in other than a stopgap way.

The time has come to pass legislation to "fix" Medicare's physician payment formula once and for all. We need to eliminate a 12-year-old formula that reduces Medicare payments to doctors when their costs exceed budget targets. It is clear the formula just doesn't work. Congress has had to step in to block these cuts for the last seven years.

It's time to do away with the formula and the scheduled pay cuts. It's an issue that has plagued physicians and patient advocates since 1997. At that time, Congress, in an attempt to curb the deficit, set up the so-called sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula that ties the rate of health care costs to the growth of our economy. Unfortunately, health care costs have continued to grow while the rest of our economy has suffered.

This is no way to run a major health care program that so many of our nation's citizens depend upon. This instability caused by repeated short-term delays in reimbursements has already affected our health care delivery system. According to the American Medical Association, one in five physicians have already been forced to limit the number of Medicare patients in their practice.

*Tell your elected representatives it is time to fix this seriously flawed payment formula. Physician reimbursement is a top priority for seniors. Seniors should not have to fear losing their doctors if payments drop too low.*

*Jim Centner, Director*




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### This Check Really is in the Mail

Over three million seniors each year are trapped in the Part D donut hole—a cruel coverage gap where they pay premiums but get no drug coverage. It's a provision only insurers could love and was included in the legislation which created Part D. Closing that donut hole has been one of our top legislative priorities and one of the most beneficial improvements included in healthcare reform legislation.

The first step in the gradual phase out to close that gap began on June 10th when the first checks were sent out to those already in the donut hole. The \$250 checks will continue to go to beneficiaries as more fall into the donut hole throughout 2010. Donut hole checks will generally be sent out every quarter.

Starting in 2011, people who reach the donut hole will receive a 50 percent discount on brand-name drugs. That means the typical senior will save \$700 next year thanks to health reform legislation. By 2020, the donut hole will be eliminated....*Source) NCPSSM*



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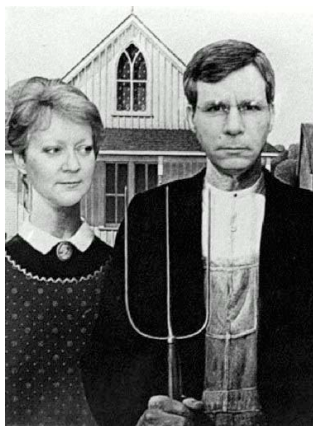
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material is usually the  
18th of the month.



**The Editors Say:**

We used to meet our friends at the cocktail lounge, now we meet them in the waiting room at the Doctor's office.

**The McNeil Report**

One of our mild mannered SOAR members, John, was tired of being bossed around by his wife, so he went to see a Psychiatrist. The Psychiatrist told him that he needed to build his self esteem, so he gave John a book on assertiveness which he read and finished on the way home.

John stormed into the house and walked up to his wife. Pointing a finger in her face, he said, "From now on, I want you to know that I am the man of this house and my word is law! I want you to prepare me a gourmet meal tonight and when I'm finished eating my meal, I expect a sumptuous dessert.....then after dinner, you're going to draw me a bath so I can relax, and when I'm finished with my bath, guess who is going to dress me and comb my hair?"

"The Funeral Director" replied his wife!!!

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*"You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream."*

-- Les Brown

The next time you're shopping for environmentally friendly light bulbs, the United Steelworkers would like you to take a look at Sylvania Super Saver halogen bulbs. Union workers make them in the USA at a Pennsylvania plant. They're available at Lowe's, Menard's, online through Sylvania and at many BJ Wholesale Club stores in the Midwest. These bulbs are very important to the USW and are a mercury-free alternative to compact fluorescent bulbs made in China.




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**Who Speaks When You're Sick?**

If you were too ill to speak for yourself, who would you want to speak for you? An "advance directive" lets you put in writing the name of the person you trust to make your health care decisions.

The best time to prepare an advance directive is before you need one. Contact your Area Agency on Aging or your state health department to learn how to set up an advance directive.

## District 12



On a national level, Congratulations to Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY) for introducing a bill that puts a 25 cent excise tax on service calls that end up going to foreign call centers. Senator Schumer said, “If we want to put a stop to the outsourcing of American jobs, then we need to provide incentives for American companies to keep American jobs here. This bill will not only serve to maintain call center jobs currently in the United States, but also provide a reason for companies that have outsourced jobs to bring them back.”

Here in California, Assembly Speaker John Perez has proposed a California Jobs Budget that protects public service jobs by setting aside almost a billion dollars to repay local governments for years of unfunded mandates. With almost every city and town struggling, we need to make job creation a priority for California’s government. John is a friend and a fellow DNC member.

We need all of our elected officials, local, state and federal to make job creation their first priority. If every elected official said, “What can I do, what legislation can I write that will insure my constituents have good employment opportunities?, this would be a better and grateful world.”

SOAR Chapter 12-2 along with USW 9518 is sponsoring a fireworks stand in Maywood, California June 28th to July 4th. The Fireworks stand will be located in the local union parking lot. The money raised by the event goes to providing lunches for the SOAR Chapter throughout the year, as well as providing funds to help with local union organizing. Thank you, James Janrhett, for your leadership in continuing to be a champion on behalf of SOAR.

*Bob (Big Red) Rankin, SOAR Board Member*

## AAM + SOAR = Results



This photo shows Jeff Rains, Rachel Bennett Steury and Mike Mitchell.

The Alliance for American Manufacturing (AAM) is a non-partisan, non-profit partnership forged to strengthen manufacturing in the U.S. AAM brings together a select group of America’s leading manufacturers and the United Steelworkers. Their mission is to promote creative policy solutions on priorities such as international trade, energy security, health care, retirement security, currency manipulation, and other issues of mutual concern.

Alliance for American Manufacturing (AAM) Coordinator and SOAR 7-34-2 Chapter President Jeff Rains worked with fellow SOAR members to host a two-day cook out in the Granite City, Illinois community. Hundreds of residents, SOAR members and workers enjoyed a great meal

and were given some AAM information as well.

They all passed out “Stop China Currency Manipulation” letters, AAM tri-folds and flyers about the town hall event that was held at the Granite City ELKS Lodge on June 12.



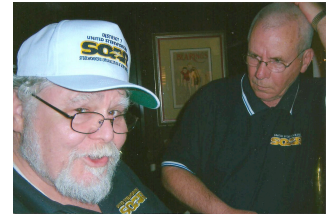
Mike Mitchell assisted by Gary Gaines, Chapter 34-2



**District 7**

At the USW Rapid Response Conference in Washington D.C., SOAR District 7 Executive Board member Steve Skvara, and SOAR International Secretary/Treasurer Charlie Averill are discussing:

- A) The Protecting America's Workers Act (PAWA), H.R. 2067 and S. 1580
- B) The Security in Energy and Manufacturing Act (SEAM), H.R. 5041 and S. 3324
- C) "Great Taste!" vs. "Less Filling!"
- D) All of the above.



The two bills mentioned above were the focus of our lobbying efforts in Washington, because we should never have a Brother or Sister die on the job, and we need to create new jobs in renewable energy for American workers. The highlight of the week for me was sitting down with other USW and SOAR members in the offices of Indiana Congressman Pete Visclosky and Senator Evan Bayh, and telling them just how important these bills are to working men and women.

I also joined former Steelworker and current Alliance for American Manufacturers (AAM) Field Coordinator Rachel Bennett Steury in a meeting with Indiana Congressman Brad Ellsworth's Legislative Director. The AAM and the Steelworkers both support the American worker, so it was a good opportunity to present our arguments jointly, and even better to be notified a few days later that Brad was signing on as a co-sponsor to this legislation. I felt especially proud to be a SOAR member, carrying on the tradition of leadership that SOAR and the United Steelworkers have developed over the years.

And you better believe that when we gathered in the park behind the Rayburn office building for a "Thank You Congress for Health Care Reform" rally, everyone in the Capitol knew the Steelworkers were in town! Many thanks to Brother Skvara, District 7 Director Jim Robinson, SOAR Director Jim Centner, Rapid Response Director Tim Waters, President Leo Gerard and everyone who made it possible for SOAR to be a part of this great week.

*Dave Kobiela, SOAR 7-PC-2* p.s. The correct answer to the question is "D"...All of the above!



**Can Help People With Their Money**

There's good news for Americans who want help getting a handle on their finances. The official government website dedicated to teaching all Americans the basics of financial education, [www.mymoney.gov](http://www.mymoney.gov), is now loaded with more information and is even easier to use. The new site has enhanced interactive features and provides additional resources to Americans seeking information that can help with their personal financial decisions. Help your members make "cents" of their finances by encouraging them to visit [www.mymoney.gov](http://www.mymoney.gov).

*Source: Social Security Update for May*



ALERT!

*Doughnut Hole  
Update*

Update

Government Affairs

May 2010

*Doughnut Hole Update: Scam Alert and What to Do***SCAM ALERT!**

Beware of scammers identifying themselves as government insurance agents who contact you in an attempt to receive bank account information. These individuals will promise to assist you obtain the \$250 rebate. However, once you fall in the doughnut hole, you automatically qualify. There is no need to file paperwork. Furthermore, **federal employees will not call and ask for bank account numbers or information in order to send you your \$250 rebate.** If you receive such a phone call or door-to-door visit, hang up the phone or shut the door, and call your state insurance department or Better Business Bureau to report the scam.

**How do I know if I am in the doughnut hole?**

If you have Medicare Part D, the doughnut hole begins once you spend \$2,830 in total prescription drug spending and extends until your total drug costs for the year reach \$6,440. Within that gap, seniors have to pay the full cost of medications out-of-pocket.

**How much will my rebate be?**

The doughnut hole rebate is \$250 per person, and will go towards helping you afford your medications.

**What do I need to do to apply for the doughnut hole rebate?**

There is no need to apply. If you have reached the doughnut hole, the government will automatically send the rebate check to you starting as early as June 15. Beware of scam artists who say they will help you apply!

**Does health care reform close the doughnut hole?**

YES! The health care bill will fully close the doughnut hole by 2020. It does so by providing Medicare beneficiaries with a \$250 rebate when they fall into the doughnut hole in 2010. Additionally, in 2011 seniors in the doughnut hole will receive a 50% discount on prescription drugs. Finally, the bill phases down the coinsurance so it is at a standard 25% throughout the plan by 2020.



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**District 4**

We continue to hammer away at the New York politicians regarding the Chinese and how they are manipulating their currency to their country's advantage. While we are doing that, America continues to lose thousands of American manufacturing jobs each week. I find it a shame that we have to continually remind our congressional representatives that we must protect American jobs first and then worry about other countries. The issue has never been FREE TRADE but FAIR TRADE between countries so that the balance of payments can be on an equal playing ground.

We are fortunate to have Congressman Brian Higgins and Senators Schumer & Gillibrand in New York, who understand the trade issue that is before us and the tremendous lost of American Manufacturing Jobs that have occurred over the past years. I do not know what it will take to awaken other congressional representatives who claim to be "free traders" that they are selling American working women and men down the drain by exporting their jobs to China and other third world countries. Other foreign countries make sure that they take care of their citizens first! I strongly believe it is time America adopts the same policy and puts an end to the exportation of our American Manufacturing jobs!!!

We are fortunate to have many good congressional representatives that support our cause and I thank them for their support. I had the good fortune to meet one such representative in Ocala, Florida this winter by the name of Alan Grayson, 8th CD-Fla. Over 70 retirees meet with Congressman Grayson at a luncheon hosted by AAM (Alliance for American Manufacturing). Grayson shares many of our views regarding the loss of American manufacturing jobs and what we should do about it in congress to stop this injustice to American Workers. One excellent point Congressman Grayson brought up is simply to "enforce the present trade laws we now have on the books" to stop the erosion of American jobs. In closing, I would just like to remind our Steelworker active members and retirees who live in District 8 in Florida to make sure they get out and support and vote for Congressman Grayson in the fall elections that will be coming up soon. We, as Steelworkers, have to make sure that we retain or friends in Congress who support our issues and rid Congress of our enemies who want to ship our jobs overseas.

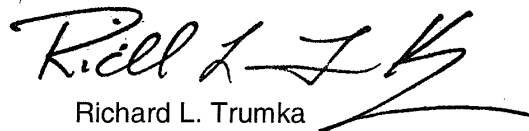
*Jim Bickhart*, SOAR Board Member

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**Below is a quote taken from a letter written to former President Bill Clinton by Richard Trumka.**

Your recent attack on unions was unwelcome – and unexpected. We have known each other for many years, and have fought on the same side of many political contests. So I would welcome an opportunity to sit down with you and hear your explanation for the remarks you made with respect to unions' role in the Democratic Senate primary in Arkansas.

Sincerely,

  
Richard L. Trumka  
President

## District 6 Report



It is the middle of June already. Summer is almost here. SOAR Chapters across Canada will now take a summer vacation. Although we have no meetings in July & August we are still involved with rallies/demonstrations. On May 31st the members of SOAR Chapter 1 joined the Security Guards LU 5296 in a rally held at Queens Park, Toronto, the home of our Provincial Government. Peter Tabuns the elected New Democratic Party member along with Carolyn Egan, President of the Steelworkers Toronto Area Council addressed the group. The Party in power (Liberal) want to start retesting guards, many who have been on the job for years. They also want to charge a renewal fee of \$80.00, plus many other things. All the workers are asking for is a Grandfather clause to protect those already licensed. We don't think that is too much to ask. Of course no member of the governing party showed up. Surprise surprise!!!!!!

Back to more pleasant conversation. SOAR members will be holding barbecues, picnics, pool parties, etc. This enables them to keep in touch with their members. Let's hope mother nature gives us some nice warm weather so we can all enjoy these activities.

Back to some more doom and gloom. Here in Toronto, everyone is gearing up for the G-20 Summit. This takes place on June 26 & 27th. Many of our streets and highways leading into the downtown core are going to be closed over the two day period of time. This will cause a lot of traffic backups, as well as anyone going into the downtown core will be carefully scrutinized. This will be especially hard on citizens to go about their daily life. The cost of this Summit has already exceeded a billion dollars. The cost of security alone is astronomical. If Toronto is so bad, why did our Prime Minister, Steven Harper hold the G-20 here in the first place? There are a number of demonstrations that will be held. We hope they are all peaceful and that no problems occur. We know that there will be nothing gained from the Summit. The powers that be have already made up there minds about what they will or will not do. I can't see them agreeing to do anything to look after the needs of so many of our citizens. Please give us your thoughts and prayers that it all goes smoothly.

Well now, after all that, I do want to take the time to wish all our SOAR members across both of our great countries, a very happy, pleasant and peaceful summer.

*Dan McNeil*, SOAR Board Member

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## Share It



A girl was drowning in the lake where I live and her boy friend tried his best to save her. He grabbed her arm but it came right off. He grabbed her other arm, but that came off too. When he grabbed her leg, the same thing happened. You guessed it, when he grabbed the other leg, it too came right off. When she yelled, "Save me, Save me, why don't you save me?", he replied, "Honey I'd save you but you're not united!"

Corny, I know, but while I have your attention, let me just say that staying united is the only way we can get anything accomplished and the best way we can stay united is to communicate with each other. Please share this "Connection" newsletter with your members. Thanks.

*Charlie Averill*, Secretary-Treasurer