

FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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Just in Time for Labor Day: New Statistics on Social Security Disability Insurance

Happy Labor Day to all Alliance members! The Social Security Administration's (SSA's) new Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) [issue paper](#) and [state fact sheets](#) show how this vital safety net is protecting workers and their families in every community across America.

Released to coincide with Labor Day, the documents focus attention on disability protections that workers earn through payroll taxes. The average person receiving SSDI payments today paid into the system for 22 years before becoming disabled.

The repository of state SSDI fact sheets includes a separate fact sheet for every U.S. state, as well as for non-state Congressional districts like Washington, D.C. and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. For each state or jurisdiction, they show:

- How many disabled workers, children of insured workers, and spouses of insured workers are receiving SSDI benefits;
- The average annual SSDI benefit in relation to the poverty threshold;
- The total annual benefits for all SSDI beneficiaries; and
- A breakdown by Congressional district showing the number of disabled workers, children of insured workers, and spouses of insured workers receiving SSDI benefits; the average monthly benefit for these groups; and the total monthly benefits for the district.

“These issue papers drive home the fact that SSDI is the only program that allows some of the most severely disabled Americans to live in dignity and we must make sure it is there for anyone who needs it in the future,” said Alliance Secretary-Treasurer **Ruben Burks**.

Asked about Social Security and Medicare by Nevada Alliance President, Rubio Denies Past Statements

On Wednesday, Nevada Alliance President **Tom Bird** [questioned](#) Sen. **Marco Rubio** of Florida, who is running to be the Republican nominee for U.S. President, about the Senator's past statements regarding Social Security and Medicare. Rubio denied saying in 2011 that those programs “weaken us as a people” (which was widely reported by the media at the time) and reiterated his support for raising the retirement age if he were to become President.

Afterwards, Mr. Bird said that other Republican candidates will be visiting Nevada and that he would call them out also if they are supporting cuts to Social Security or Medicare.

Coalition of Labor Union Women's Health Survey: Help Determine What's Most Important

The Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) has partnered with HealthyWomen and the Spread the Word campaign to create a short [survey](#) about women's health needs. This survey will allow CLUW to provide union women with the health information they want on a regular basis. All answers will be kept confidential.

"We are pleased to assist our allies at the CLUW in gathering critical information about women's health needs," said Alliance President **Barbara J. Easterling**. "I encourage any woman who is an Alliance member or union member to participate."

Study: Higher Social Security Benefits Increase Cognitive Function among Beneficiaries

Researchers at the University of Iowa found that higher Social Security benefit payments were associated with significantly higher cognitive function among beneficiaries according to a paper published by the National Bureau of Economic Research this summer. According to the study, a \$1,000 permanent increase in annual benefits was associated with a 1.4% improvement in overall cognition, an improvement that is considered to be clinically meaningful. These results suggest that interventions at advanced ages can slow the rate of decline in cognitive function in older Americans.

"These results make the case for expanding Social Security even stronger," said Alliance Executive Director **Richard Fiesta**. "It certainly appears that the dementia from which some seniors suffer can be partially addressed by diminishing poverty in this country."