

Retiree Review

Oregon ARA will be the premiere organization on issues affecting retirement security

ORARA adopts Legislative Agenda for 2009-2011

By Dr. Jim Davis

The Oregon Alliance for Retired Americans has endorsed the 2009-2010 Legislative Priorities developed by United Seniors of Oregon, a long time progressive coalition of senior and consumer groups, including ORARA and many other labor retiree groups.

United Seniors of Oregon was formed in 1979 and has been a leading voice in coalition efforts for issues that concern seniors and people with disabilities. Verna Porter, ORARA president, serves as the Vice President of United Seniors, following in the footsteps of her late husband Bob, who served as President up until his death.

The first area of support within the priorities deals with Oregon's model senior and disabilities services system. The Seniors and People with Disabilities Division within the Department of Human Services has taken serious programmatic cuts over the past decade, but with the current state budget crisis, advocates will have to unite to save significant levels of community-based long term care services that will almost certainly be on the chopping block. Legislative recommendations in this area include:

- Support inflationary and caseload growth in the SPD budget and oppose any cuts to the SPD/DHS services that could damage Oregon's national model home and community-based long term care system.
- Oppose any attempt to integrate managed health care into the senior and disability services system or the community-based long term care system through SPD/DHS.
- Support a substantial increase in the Oregon Project Independence budget by reinstating the state general fund commitment and utilizing the Senior and Disability Tax Deferral Reserve Fund as a supplement to OPI to meet the needs of both the senior and disability populations.
- Support 2009-2011 continuing service-level funding of Long Term Care Ombudsman Program budget to continue advocacy and watch-dog activities for residents of Oregon's long term care facilities.
- Support adequate wages, benefits and training for home care workers who provide in-home care for seniors and people with disabilities.
- Support the development of a consumer-based, state-level task force that will include consumers, advocates, providers and bureaucrats to take a comprehensive look at the boomer population explosion, its impact on the senior and disability services system, and what needs to be done to maintain our model community-based long term care system and senior and disability service network into the future.

In the area of health care, senior advocates continue to support the Oregon Health Plan, statewide health care reform and access to health care services for low-income individuals. Access to and management of medications is important. There was also continued support for reaching out more effectively to sen-

Davis to conduct lobby training for ORARA; Members prepare to lobby

In preparation for ORARA Lobby Day on February 17, Dr. Jim Davis, ORARA Board Member and Director of United Seniors of Oregon, will conduct a lobby training for Alliance members at the January 22 membership meeting.

Members will gain an understanding of ORARA's legislative agenda and how to approach their legislator regarding these issues.

Members are invited to attend this training and prepare to lobby on behalf of our issues.

ORARA Annual Convention scheduled

The Oregon Alliance for Retired Americans has scheduled its annual Convention for Saturday, March 14. The Convention this year will be held at the SEIU Hall at 6401 SE Foster Rd. in Portland.

Watch for additional information in the near future.

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Election over? Or just beginning!

By Verna Porter, Oregon ARA President



Another election is past. Many are saying “There has been nothing like it since Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected.” Because of

our concerns about the current financial crisis, the promise of change is encouraging.

My daughter, granddaughter, and grandson were with me on election night awaiting results. Josh is 16 and was very excited about the election. According to his teacher, the next day in school he gave a very good report on the event.

When the Obama win was an-

nounced on the big screen, we all reacted very emotionally. There were about ten African Americans sitting around the table next to us and in the happy chaos that followed the announcement, the tears and hugs we shared brought us all together in joyful emotion.

Statements were made over and over about how we had finally become one nation. This was a very memorable time in all our lives.

ORARA was also pleased with the ballot measure results. None of Mr. Sizemore’s measures passed. Defend Oregon must be given credit in the effort to defeat those measures. They showed great leadership in involving many groups and educating Oregon’s citizens about the meaning and intent of the measures so they could make the right decision when they voted.

We were a part of that successful effort. Now the Legislature is back in session and we must remain vigilant in order to make sure that gains made in the past are not lost.

ORARA has some big events coming up:

- At our January membership meeting, Jim Davis will conduct a Lobby Training so we are ready to lobby our legislatures. Thanks, everyone for your participation.
- We will hold a Lobby Day on February 17. Watch our website for more information.
- The ORARA Annual Convention will be held Saturday March 14. Watch for more information coming soon.
- The National ARA will hold the Legislative Conference June 15—17 in Washington, DC. This is a chance to lobby our representatives in Congress.

Thanks for your participation.

Gonzales resigns

Many of you came to know Oregon ARA Field Organizer, Andrew Gonzales during 2008. Gonzales was hired by the national office to serve as Field Rep in Oregon beginning in early April 2008. Gonzales resigned following the November election and returned to California.

During his time with us, we came to know him as an eager, energetic organizer who worked tirelessly on our behalf. He was instrumental in the addition of four (4) new affiliates and Benefactor Membership contributions from several organizations.

We will certainly miss Andrew Gonzales and wish him well in his endeavors in California.

The national ARA is currently processing requests for grants for 2009 and will be posting positions soon. If the Oregon ARA is awarded a grant, we will know by mid-February and should have a new organizer hired before the end of February.

Website of the Month:

www.adult-care.org

Check out this website for information on skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, adult foster homes and more.

Calendar of Events

- Jan. 22—Membership Meeting**, 10 am
- Feb. 12—Board Meeting*, 10 am
- Feb. 17—Lobby Day, Salem
- Feb. 26—Membership Meeting**, 10 am
- Mar. 14—ORARA Annual Convention
- * NOLC, 11th & Madison
- ** Westmoreland Union Manor, 6404 SE 23rd

The **Alliance for Retired Americans Retiree Review** is published by the Oregon Alliance for Retired Americans, 2118 NE 50th, Portland, OR 97213

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The *Retiree Review* is printed by union printers, members of AFT Local 3922, at Portland Community College.

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iors and people with disabilities with mental illness and addictions. Below are the health care priorities:

- Support increased funding for the Oregon Health Plan and strongly oppose efforts to further reduce the level of health and mental health services or place further limitations on access to health care services for Medicaid recipients.
- Support the Oregon Prescription Drug Program, access to prescription drugs for the low-income, and strong statewide and local community medication education programs for older persons and people with disabilities, service/care providers and health professionals.
- Support funding of statutory changes and comprehensive services that address the mental health and addiction treatment needs of seniors, people with disabilities, persons with dementia, and their caregivers.
- Support guarantees for consumer access in health insurance coverage for any certified and/or licensed health professional in Oregon.
- Support maintenance of the current Alzheimer's Research Tax Check-Off Program.
- Support a tax credit against personal income taxes for taxpayers providing non-reimbursed home care assistance with relatives.

United Seniors and their partners also support other issues that affect the senior population, including long term care patient protections, protective services, guardianship, manufactured homes, self-serve gas, housing, transportation, and spousal impoverishment. Here are some of the other recommendations on the priority list:

- Support efforts to protect residents of adult foster homes, residential care facilities, assisted living facilities, and nursing homes from efforts to undercut patient protections in existing statutes.
- Support strengthening of statutes and funding for the prevention and protection from the abuse of seniors and people with disabilities.
- Support legislation that would protect the dignity and rights of individuals who are subject to guardianship and to protect clients against being taken advantage of or abused.
- Support funding for the senior/disabled transportation program.
- Support funding for the state Housing Trust Fund and increased incentives to create affordable housing for limited income populations.
- Support the protection of the rights of residents of manufactured home parks.
- Oppose legislation that would repeal the prohibition on self-service gasoline dispensing.
- Support state funding for Senior Corps Programs, including RSVP, Senior Companion and Foster Grandparents.
- Support the continuation of federal and state protections for seniors, people with disabilities, and persons with dementia under spousal impoverishment provisions of Medicaid.
- Support a diverse and inclusive community that recognizes the uniqueness, value and worth of every individual, including issues ethnic minorities, gays and lesbians, gender, age and culture.

Dr. Jim Davis is Director of United Seniors. You may contact him for more information at davisjasr@aol.com.

Donate to Oregon Veterans Home

Irv Fletcher, Korean War veteran, President Emeritus of the Oregon AFL-CIO and Chair of the Oregon Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee recently requested that we donate to the Oregon Veterans Home. The Board is passing that request on to you, ORARA members.

Fletcher reported that the Veterans Home was not built nor currently maintained with state general fund dollars. This home is "one of the best in the nation... but we need to support it." Fletcher said.

We encourage you to send your tax deductible donation to the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs, 700 Sumner St., Salem, OR 97301.

The Veterans Home is "The Place Where Honor Lives." Won't you show your support with a donation.

United Way Campaign

Members of the American labor movement have always worked to help our brothers, sisters and neighbors in time of need, and that is also the mission of the United Way. The United Way funds many vital services in the community, including Labor's Community Service Agency, for the less fortunate among us.

Even though retired, we encourage ORARA members to donate to United Way and to consider designating your donation to Labor's Community Service Agency.



Membership Application/Oregon ARA Financial Contributor

- YES! I want to join the Oregon Alliance of Retired Americans because I too am committed to social and economic justice for retirees. I agree we must protect and strengthen social security, Medicare, and similar programs that promote retirement security for older Americans. Enclosed is \$10 for a one-year individual/couple membership. (Payable annually) New Renewal
- I would like to become a Financial Contributor to the Oregon Alliance for Retired Americans by enclosing \$_____ to the Oregon Alliance to help fund organization activities.

Please print:

Name: _____ Spouse/Partner: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email address: _____

Community Organization or Union Name & Number (if applicable): _____ Date _____

Make your check or money order payable to **Oregon Alliance for Retired Americans** and mail with this form to: **Oregon Alliance for Retired Americans, 2118 NE 50th, Portland, OR 97213**



Oregon ARA members, through their affiliate unions, participated in the election in many ways. Above is pictured a group that was in attendance when the national ARA announced its endorsement of Jeff Merkley for the U.S. Senate. From left: Steve Kofahl, Jane Netboy, National Rep Bill Holyater, Sharon Helgerson, Al Marino, Jim Davis, Val Jack, Verna Porter, Jeff Merkley, Norma Lawson, Jim Gerhardt and Bill Shatava.

HOLD THE DATE!!!

**ORARA Lobby Day in Salem
February 17, 2009**

**Annual ORARA Convention
March 14, 2009**

**ARA Legislative Conference
Washington, DC
June 15-17, 2009**



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