



RESOLUTION

THE EMPLOYMENT NON-DISCRIMINATION ACT

Approved April 7, 2010

Whereas, the Alliance for Retired Americans recognizes that there should be no discrimination against workers because of their sexual orientation; and

Whereas, LGBT workers still suffer discrimination in hiring and advancement, harassment in the workplace, exclusion of their partners from health and other benefits, and on average earn lower wages than their straight counterparts; and

Whereas, federal employees have no statutory protections against sexual orientation or gender identity discrimination in the workplace; and

Whereas, only 12 states currently have statutory protections against both sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination in the workplace; and

Whereas, federal anti-discrimination laws would benefit even states that now prohibit such discrimination by allowing the federal Justice Department to assist in investigation and prosecution of cases of discrimination; and

Whereas, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) would add protections for LGBT workers to federal civil rights law; and

Whereas, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, former President John Sweeney, and the AFL-CIO National Executive Council have endorsed ENDA.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Alliance for Retired Americans endorses the speedy passage of ENDA legislation including both sexual orientation and gender identity.



RESOLUTION

ELDER ABUSE

Approved April 7, 2010

Whereas, several hundred thousand seniors annually are victims of some sort of abuse or exploitation with many instances going unreported; and

Whereas, instances of substance abuse, financial stress, emotional stress, lack of social or other community supports, inadequate training for caregivers, increased medical and emotional needs of the elder person and a family history of violence constitute risk of senior victimization; and

Whereas, the nation as a whole is not prepared to safeguard seniors from harm or to address the multifaceted causes of victimization; and

Whereas, neglect is the most common form of abuse with financial exploitation occurring with equal frequency; and

Whereas, elderly abuse by families occurs in approximately half the reported cases; and

Whereas, the abuse is often not reported by the victim due to fear, guilt and shame and, as is often the case, the victim is dependent upon the perpetrator who threatens the elderly with institutionalization if she/he is reported to the police; and

Whereas, elderly victims suffer from a high rate of social and physical isolation, thereby limiting access to communicate such problems with anyone other than their caretakers; and

Whereas, the recent enactment of the federal Elder Justice Act includes increased funding for protective services and coordinated response by local, state, federal agencies to elder abuse.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Alliance for Retired Americans will use its leadership and vital community linkages in addressing abuse in the elderly population, including teachers and professionals; and

Be it further resolved that the Alliance for Retired Americans work with its affiliates and other appropriate organizations to coordinate their social service networks with appropriate authorities and thereby assist in potential investigation and intervention in the growing number and complexity of elder abuse cases; and

Be it further resolved, that the Alliance for Retired Americans supports legislation to address this problem and require elder abuse to be a reportable incident nationwide.

RESOLUTION

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUGS REIMBURSEMENTS FOR EMPLOYERS

Approved April 7, 2010

Whereas, the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 gave to employers, an opportunity to apply annually for a 28% reimbursement of the aggregate total of prescription drugs costs (adjusted annually for inflation since 2006) of their Medicare eligible retirees; and

Whereas, this rebate was intended to encourage employers to retain retirees' prescription drug coverage and to offset the inflationary costs of providing such coverage; and

Whereas, the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) and Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) has created a requirements that employers include as a liability in their balance sheets and budgets the cost of providing retirees' health insurance over a projected 30 year period; and

Whereas, some employers have used these requirements in such a way to negatively impact their retirees in their communities, by placing the blame for increased prices or taxes on negotiated health and dental insurance costs for their employees, particularly their retirees; and

Whereas, the Medicare regulations presently do not require that the Medicare prescription drug tax reductions and reimbursements be used to safeguard, maintain or improve their retirees health and prescription drug benefits; and

Whereas, some employers have placed these Medicare Part D rebates into general revenues, and

Whereas, some employers still are reducing health insurance, dental and prescription drug benefits and increasing insurance premiums, deductibles and co-pays of both their employees and retirees.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Alliance for Retired Americans work to seek changes to the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 that would ensure that these Medicare Part D prescription drug rebates be used for the purpose intended, to protect retirees' prescription drug benefits and to offset the inflationary costs of providing such coverage; and

Be it further resolved that the Alliance for Retired Americans work with international unions to ensure that local unions are aware that there is an option for employers to receive annually a partial tax credit or reimbursement for the costs of Medicare Part D prescription drugs upon an approved annual application to Medicare.

RESOLUTION

RETIREES AS VOLUNTEERS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

Approved April 7, 2010

Whereas, our country was founded on the worth of the individual whose talents and skills were utilized for the benefit of community and whose values included a strong sense of being helpful to others; and

Whereas, this sense of community has been extended from our own immediate neighborhoods and geographic areas to the world itself in such volunteer projects as the Red Cross, the Peace Corps and Senior Corps, bringing fellowship and friendship to the people of the world; and

Whereas, the generosity of Americans has been proved time and time again with their contributions to both fellow Americans and to the people of the rest of the world in times of serious problems and natural disasters; and

Whereas, the employees who provide services to the schools of our state and nation are a special breed whose own talents and skills have provided a better way of life to both the students in their care and the communities that they serve; and

Whereas, many of these same public servants are active and involved in the many facets of their own communities through volunteer efforts in many of the services that are needed or that simply make our communities a better and safer place for all.

Therefore be it resolved, that the Alliance for Retired Americans continue to recognize these community activists and promote such activity to all its members.

RESOLUTION
DRUG ADVERTISING

Approved April 7, 2010

Whereas, America's pharmaceutical companies spend an amount approximately equal to one-third of their profits on direct drug advertising; and

Whereas, this advertising, which is often misleading, tends to create a false sense of need with ordinary Americans; and

Whereas, the drugs needed for any medical problem should be the decision of the patient and the physician; and

Whereas, the enormous amounts of money that pharmaceutical companies put into advertising would be far better spent on research and on lowering the cost of those pharmaceutical products necessary to the health of people of all ages.

Be it resolved that the Alliance for Retired Americans, the labor movement, and consumer organizations pursue federal legislation outlawing the advertising of prescription drugs in both electronic and print media.

RESOLUTION

IRS SECTION 125 PLAN FOR RETIREES

Approved April 7, 2010

Whereas, many local unions have negotiated 125 or “cafeteria plans” for their members, giving them the right to these same members lose the privilege of utilizing pre-tax dollars for out-of-pocket medical expenses when they retire; and

Whereas, the need for medical services, products and equipment increases as we age, placing a severe strain on the limited income of many retired working Americans; and

Whereas, the escalating costs of these services, products and equipment has forced many retirees to do without – or to limit intake of the prescribed amounts in order to balance their strained retirement income.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Alliance for Retired Americans work for and urge unions affiliated with the labor movement to support legislation that would allow retirees to utilize the provisions of the IRS Section 125 to cover the same list of allowed expenses allowed to their still-working counterparts with 125 Plans.

RESOLUTION

JOBS FOR AMERICANS

Approved April 7, 2010

Whereas, the job market in the U.S. has deteriorated to the point where millions of Americans are out of work, nearly 10% of the workforce, and with many more falling into the "underemployed" category; and

Whereas, while the federal government averted a meltdown in the nation's banking system through a variety of actions, including an economic stimulus program, the crisis in jobs has persisted; and

Whereas, a robust economy with low unemployment results in more contributions to the Social Security and Medicare Trust Funds, which bolsters their financial stability; and

Whereas, a robust economy with low unemployment provides increased revenues to state and local governments to fund needed programs for older Americans; and

Whereas, the need to provide jobs for all willing workers is urgent.

Therefore be it resolved that the Alliance for Retired Americans supports a jobs plan that includes these elements:

1. A 12-month extension of unemployment insurance benefits; and
2. A full commitment to rebuild the nation's infrastructure, including schools, roads and energy systems; and
3. Increased federal aid to state and local governments to maintain vital services; and
4. A government effort to match unemployed Americans to jobs that need to be done in distressed communities across the nation; and
5. Use of remaining TARP funds to enable community banks to lend money to small-and medium-sized businesses; and

Be it further resolved, that the Alliance for Retired Americans endorses quick action on job creation - which is not to be confused with blind subsidies to employers who do not follow through on job creation promises.

RESOLUTION

REMOVE SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. ASTRUE

Approved April 7, 2010

Whereas, Social Security Commissioner Michael J. Astrue has refused to work with the employee representatives (AFGE, ALJ/IFPTE) towards the mission of the Agency in providing outstanding service to the American public; and

Whereas, Commissioner Astrue has implemented policies and procedure changes without sufficient testing and employee input, thus placing the public at great risk to be disadvantaged in their benefit choices; and

Whereas, Commissioner Astrue has disadvantaged unrepresented claimants in disability hearings by not providing sufficient staff to explain new electronic processes, such as their electronic disability file; and

Whereas, trained Social Security Administration (“SSA”) workers are now being instructed not to question an applicant’s month of election, even when the choice may be disadvantageous to the applicant; and

Whereas, SSA employees are now being instructed in some sites to direct applicants to the internet to file for benefits, even though they have come into a field office to be interviewed by an SSA employee; and

Whereas, on March 3, 2009, the AFL-CIO Executive Board urged immediate presidential action to remove Michael J. Astrue as Commissioner of the Social Security Administration for his neglect of duty in administering the Social Security Administration and its programs.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Alliance for Retired Americans will stand with the AFL-CIO, with the American Federation of Government Employees, and with the Association of Administrative Law Judges/International Federation of Professional and Technical Employees in calling upon the President to remove Michael J. Astrue as Commissioner of the Social Security Administration, as he has neglected his duty to carry out the mission of Social Security as mandated by law.

RESOLUTION

REDUCING HEALTH CARE FRAUD

Approved April 7, 2010

Whereas, health care fraud burdens the nation with enormous financial costs, while threatening the quality of health care, siphoning billions of dollars from public and private health insurance programs; and

Whereas, the greatest damage is done by providers of health care, and

Whereas, estimates of health care fraud range from 3% of all health care expenditures to 10%; and

Whereas, in 2008 national health care spending increased to \$2.3 trillion, which translates to \$7,681 per person and represents 16.2 percent of the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP); and

Whereas, a moderate estimate of health care fraud that year would come to \$149.5 billion in 2008, representing \$488 for every American; and

Whereas, health care fraud not only unnecessarily increases health care costs, which are already unaffordable to many Americans, but may result in the denial of necessary services that may then pose a direct threat to a persons' health and result in improper care in the future through billing for services never provided, billing for more expensive services than were provided, performing medically unnecessary services for the sole purpose of increasing billing, and misrepresenting non-covered services as covered services.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Alliance for Retired Americans continues to call upon Congress to aggressively reduce health care fraud by:

- Creating sufficient numbers of specialized health care fraud investigation and prosecution units to detect and punish health care fraud in a timely manner; and
- Undertaking a review of criminal penalties to ensure that they are sufficient to deter health care fraud; and
- Requiring that all private and public health insurance plans maintain internal fraud detection programs that meet nationally recognized standards; and
- Establishing a national toll free telephone fraud hotline.

RESOLUTION

SUPPORT RITE AID WORKERS IN LANCASTER, CALIFORNIA

Approved April 7, 2010

Whereas, the workers at the Rite Aid Distribution Center in Lancaster, California have been trying to negotiate a first contract for almost two years; and

Whereas, these workers have endured the brunt of anti-union activity by their management that has included intimidation, discrimination and firing for union activity; and

Whereas, the Rite Aid workers have become the “Poster Children” for why we need the Employee Free Choice Act; and

Whereas, three of the Alliance for American’s chartered states, Washington, Oregon and California have already passed resolutions of support for these workers; and

Whereas, the Rite Aid corporation prides itself on its “Living More” program for Seniors; and

Whereas, the mission of the Alliance for Retired Americans is to ensure social and economic justice and full civil rights for all citizens so they may enjoy lives of dignity, personal and family fulfillment and serenity; and

Whereas, the primary objective of the Alliance is to enroll and mobilize retired Union members and other senior and community activists into a nationwide grass roots movement that advocates for a progressive political and social agenda – one that respects work and strengthens families.

Therefore be it resolved that the Alliance for Retired Americans calls on the Rite Aid corporations’ CEO to settle a fair first contract now; and

Be it further resolved that the Alliance for Retired Americans asks the CEO to visit the democratically elected bargaining team and their co-workers in Lancaster, CA; and

Be it further resolved that the Alliance for Retired Americans pledge to help these workers achieve a fair first contract by writing letters, signing petitions and calling the corporate offices of Rite Aid as part of any national actions.

RESOLUTION

BUY UNION MADE PRODUCTS MADE IN THE USA

Approved April 7, 2010

Whereas, we have 15.4 million people unemployed or nearly 10% of U.S. workers, and household income adjusted for inflation, has shrunk in the past decade; and

Whereas, more than 3 million U.S. manufacturing jobs have disappeared since 1998, and Goldman Sachs estimates 400,000-600,000 professional services and information sector jobs moved overseas in the past few years.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Alliance for Retired Americans encourages its member to buy union-made products made in the United States and publicize the work and information published and disseminated by the Union Label Department of the AFL-CIO.

RESOLUTION

OPPOSITION TO AGE DISCRIMINATION

Approved April 7, 2010

Whereas, Age Discrimination in Employment Act complaints are soaring in the private and public sectors nationwide as the ranks of older workers increase exponentially; and

Whereas, age discrimination against older workers has been given a lower priority compared to other civil rights complaints; and

Whereas there have been numerous damaging legal rulings that have created barriers to age discrimination lawsuits; and

Whereas, the courts decided that if pension or salaries costs are too high, it is not discrimination to fire older workers, and

Whereas, the Supreme Court recently ruled that older workers must show that age was a decisive, not just a “contributing problem” to their firing; and

Whereas, there are many accepted ageist stereotypes of older workers being ineffective, slow, and accident prone, and

Whereas, research shows that older workers are traditionally safer and more reliable workers than their younger counterparts.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Alliance for Retired Americans, its members and affiliates, support congressional and administrative action to strengthen enforcement of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act to make age discrimination equal to the enforcement of other civil rights violations, and to create stronger provisions that protect the rights of older workers and responds to standards that have created unacceptable burdens of proof for older workers facing discrimination.

RESOLUTION

NATIONAL COMMISSION ON FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND REFORM

Approved April 7, 2010

Whereas, President Obama by Executive Order 13531 on February 18, 2010 created the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform (“Commission”); and

Whereas, the mission of the Commission includes proposing recommendations designed to balanced the federal budget, exclusive of interest payments, by 2015; and

Whereas, the mission of the Commission further includes proposing of recommendations that include “changes to address the growth of entitlement spending and the gap between the projected revenues and expenditures of the Federal Government;” and

Whereas, the Commission shall report recommendations no later than December 1, 2010; and

Whereas, the issuance of a final report by the Commission shall require the concurrence of not less than 14 of the 18 members of the Commission; and

Whereas, the leaders of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate have stated that their respective bodies will vote on the Commission recommendations soon after the issuance of a final report, expected in December 2010, after the November elections; and

Whereas, Erskine Bowles and Alan Simpson have been appointed co-chairs of the Commission; and

Whereas, Erskine Bowles has stated that the Commission will “mess” with Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security; and

Whereas, Alan Simpson while a United States Senator from Wyoming consistently attacked advocacy groups for older Americans while referring to them as “greedy geezers;” and

Whereas, the Republican congressional members of the Commission have an average lifetime score of 6.5% on the Alliance for Retired Americans Voting Record; and

Whereas, older Americans rely heavily for their economic and health security on entitlement programs such as Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid; and

Whereas, the accumulated surplus in the Social Security Trust Fund is approaching \$2.5 trillion.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Alliance for Retired Americans calls upon the Commission to hold open, public hearings throughout 2010 around the nation where testimony will be received from older Americans; and

Be it further resolved that the Alliance for Retired Americans calls on the Commission to conclude that the nation's current deficits were not caused by the Social Security program but instead were caused by tax cuts skewed toward the wealthiest Americans, two wars, and an unprecedented economic crisis caused by Wall Street excesses; and

Be it further resolved that the Alliance for Retired Americans opposes reducing Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid benefits in the name of balancing the federal budget and calls upon Congress to reject any and all proposals to cut these benefits.