HEALTH CARE MOVES TO HOUSE

Tell Your State Rep to Bridge The Senior Health Care Gap

Building on the success of the “Bridge the Gap” healthcare bill passing in the MA Senate this past November, MSAC is ready to make the final push. Everybody knows that the squeaky wheel gets the oil, so in the coming months it’s time to amplify senior voices all across the state. The high healthcare cost burden is being felt in all corners of the Commonwealth so we need everyone - no matter your zip code - to contact your State Representative so that the MA House of Reps will not forget the importance of this legislation. In communities across the Commonwealth, Mass Senior Action will be building momentum for affordable senior healthcare through regional forums, where legislators can hear the voices of seniors who will be directly affected by this bill, and they can share their plans to support lowering the cost of elder healthcare.

The Bridge the Gap Campaign has been mobilizing the community to call for affordable and accessible healthcare for low-income seniors for three years now. Members from across the state have been hitting the halls of the State House and meeting with legislators in their district offices to let them know that it is time to Bridge the Senior Healthcare Gap! Since the launch of the Bridge the Gap campaign, Mass Senior Action has: Gathered 51 legislative co-sponsors for our bill, formed a Healthcare Steering Committee, publicly testified at the Joint Committee on Healthcare Finance, collected thousands of campaign postcards, built a Coalition for Elder Economic Security, met with numerous state legislators, hosted a Western Mass legislative healthcare forum, conducted Bridge the Gap community presentations throughout the Commonwealth, interviewed with Mass Senior Action members at statehouse dressed up as Easter Bunnies to encourage Representatives to be “good eggs” and vote for our healthcare bill.

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Enclosed are membership dues for:

☐ $10 1-year individual  ☐ $15 1-year couple  ☐ $50 individual lifetime  ☐ $75 couple lifetime

NAME(s): ________________________________________________________________

ADDRESS: ________________________________________________________________ APT #: __________

CITY: ________________________________ STATE: __________ ZIP: __________

PHONE: ________________________________ EMAIL: ____________________________

Make checks payable to: MSAC
Mail to: Mass Senior Action, 108 Myrtle St., Suite 112, Quincy, MA 02171
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT  by Edna Pruce

I hope everyone has survived the New England winter and is ready to focus on a successful spring and summer season with Mass Senior Action Council.

I would like to acknowledge on behalf of the organization our deep sadness at the passing of Representative Kocot, House Chair of the Health Care Finance Committee.

Representative Kocot was an ally of Mass Senior Action, but more importantly a champion on issues of equity and committed to improving the security of lower income elders in Massachusetts. When asked by a reporter what would be in the House Healthcare bill his response made his commitment clear: Rep Kocot stated, "I'm meeting with all stakeholder groups. I'm touring hospitals. I'm talking to doctors. And probably more importantly I'm talking to health care consumers. I met with Mass. Senior Action Council and it's clear that we've got seniors that have to choose between meals and prescriptions, and I want to make sure that the House bill solves that problem."

His leadership and enthusiastic support within the House will be sorely missed but we will not give up.

"Change has never been made by just one person; change comes when organized people work collectively for the good of the entire group. Mass Senior Action Council is celebrating 37 years of improving the lives of the entire community and we will rely on that history to change the economic disparity facing Massachusetts seniors. We will make Rep Kocot's vision a reality, because we know all too well the reality facing thousands who are choosing between meals and prescriptions.

In this edition of our newsletter, you will find ample opportunities to join us in our goal of lowering the cost of health care for people over 65 in the Commonwealth. We are planning community forums in four parts of the state to allow those from each community to speak up about their high medical out of pocket expenses, we will meet with our elected state leaders throughout the Spring to build for a major senior action presence at the State House in Boston to highlight our intent to Bridge the Gap for seniors. I invite each one of you to join us, to speak up, and add your voice and your story to our campaign. 19 other states have found a way to lower the health care cost for seniors and we have a plan so Massachusetts can do it too.

People Power Will Prevail!

We will fight on! In memory of our healthcare champion: Representative Peter Kocot

Peter Vincent Kocot represented the First Hampshire district, which includes Montgomery, Hatfield, Southampton, Westhampton, and Northampton.

Kocot had two sons, Jake and Luke, with his wife of 29 years, Shauneen. Kocot died on February 21, 2018, after a brief illness, at the age of 61.

Mass Senior Action sends our deepest sympathy to the his family and the promise to continue to fight until his vision to lower health care cost for seniors, is realized.

Contact your Representative: It is time to Bridge The Gap!

MISSION: As a democratic, grassroots, senior-run organization, Mass Senior Action is committed to empowering seniors and others to act collectively to promote the rights and well-being of all people, but particularly vulnerable seniors.
local & state newspapers & radio, presented at Senior Conferences, tabled at Senior Fairs, briefed legislative aides, submitted Bridge the Gap articles to local news, formed collaborative initiatives, engaged in advocacy efforts with Coalition members, in Boston, Cambridge and Somerville members successfully advocated city leaders to pass resolutions that was then sent to state delegations, enlisted the support of family, neighbors and friends to Bridge the Senior Healthcare Gap!

As MSAC prepares for the final legislative push, members and staff have traveled all over the state and heard from seniors who have shared powerful stories about our inadequate health care system; many who cannot afford out-of-pocket costs imposed by their Medicare and supplement plans. Many seniors have no choice but to split, or, in many cases, not take medication because of the unfairly high price of prescription drugs. While it can feel really bad to have to face these decisions, it’s clear that this isn’t the fault of individuals -- it’s the fault of a healthcare system that has forgotten about seniors. While Massachusetts is often regarded as a leader in healthcare, the system in place overlooks support for seniors. For a population whose healthcare needs can often be much greater and more urgent than their younger counterparts, there is nothing in place to stop healthcare costs from skyrocketing, totally unchecked. In fact, 1 in 3 low-income seniors are paying over 20% of their incomes on healthcare, every single month. This is truly a crisis. And while some narratives try to convince people that it is the personal failing of seniors in our community for being squeezed by healthcare costs, it is clear that it is the fault of an unfair system. At Mass Senior Action, members are saying, we won’t take it anymore -- it’s time to take charge!

MSAC’s Health Care Steering Committee meets monthly to strategize about this campaign and plan the next steps that Mass Senior Action will take. The Committee’s focus is to get our bill, now known as An Act Regarding Medicare Savings Programs Eligibility - sponsored by Senator Lewis and Representative Garlick along with over 50 co-sponsors - (S.640 & H. 615), to pass. MSAC chapters are hosting regional Elder Economic Healthcare forums in our chapter areas to thank legislators who support and to offer an opportunity for those who have not signed on, to add their support as well. Please Save the Date for Tuesday, June 12th for our Senior Lobby Day, State House-Boston, it will be
a great day for our final push to pass this bill. (see pg. 14)

Join us in the bridge the gap to affordable healthcare effort for seniors by calling your state legislators or Governor Baker to ask for their support of House Bill 615 and Senate Bill 640. Do you pay more than 5% of your income on your Medicare cost? We want to hear from you! If you think it is time Massachusetts Bridge the Gap for seniors, contact Mass Senior Action. Contact MSAC at 617-284-1234 or cvillers@masssenioraction.org

Metro North chapter with their State Senator Jason Lewis, the sponsor of our Medicare Savings Bill. Senator Lewis thanked MSAC for our advocacy, “together we can lower healthcare cost for seniors.”

Should for-profit hospitals determine your staffing needs?

A Nurse’s Professional Responsibility
When you or a loved one are hospitalized, the person most responsible for your care and safety is your registered nurse. At your most vulnerable time, your assigned registered nurse cares for you and keeps you safe while managing your return to health — administering medications, monitoring your vital signs, etc.

Rationing Your Nursing Care
But did you know, outside of intensive care units, there is no law that specifies how many patients a nurse can safely care for at one time in all other patient care areas? In fact, nurses are forced by hospital administrators to care for six to eight patients, or more, at a time. According to a study in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) that is double the number that is safe for you, the patient.

The Hospital Industry
Hospitals are no longer the charitable community organizations they once were. Most hospitals have been merged into massive corporate networks, with the focus on profit, not you the patient. In fact, Massachusetts hospitals rank near the bottom nationally for many indicators of patient safety and quality. Your safety is being put at risk.

A Call to Action
Because we take our duty to protect our community and our patients' safety seriously we, as registered nurses, are working to protect the safety of our patients directly — by engaging in a ballot initiative campaign to specify a safe maximum limit for the number of patients a nurse can safely care for at one time in all areas of the hospital. Extensive medical research shows this will improve your care and save all of us money by preventing costly re-admissions, infections, and medical errors.

submitted by the Mass Nurses Assoc.
The Department of Justice, under the leadership of Attorney General Jeff Sessions, asked the Census Bureau to include a question about citizenship on the 2020 count, claiming it would help the DOJ enforce the Voting Rights Act. Legal experts question that claim.

The Trump administration announced this week that the 2020 census would — for the first time in over 50 years — ask everyone in the U.S. whether they are a citizen. The announcement, which comes in the midst of the administration’s immigration crackdown, has provoked new fears in the immigrant community.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) requested the question in a letter, claiming that the citizenship information will help it better enforce the Voting Rights Act (VRA), which among other things requires states to ensure that voters of color are not robbed of the power to elect their candidates of choice through redistricting. The DOJ said it “needs a reliable calculation of the citizens voting age population in localities where voting rights violations are alleged or suspected.”

The letter claims that census citizenship data would be more accurate than the American Community Survey, a more frequent but narrower survey that has been used for VRA enforcement.

Immigrant advocates and former Census Bureau officials have argued that many families with undocumented members would refuse to participate in the 2020 count because of the question.

A September 2017 survey found that fears about the census have increased markedly among immigrants since Trump took office after campaigning against immigration, despite strict confidentiality rules implemented after World War II, when the Census Bureau gave government agencies information on Japanese Americans so that they could be sent to internment camps.

The administration’s claim that its controversial census question would actually protect voters of color echoes a claim from state legislators who racially gerrymandered black voters in Alabama, North Carolina, and other states under the guise of guarding their rights.

When the VRA was passed in 1965, it required states and counties with a history of voting discrimination to “pre-clear” changes to voting laws or processes with the federal government. Although the U.S. Supreme Court struck down this requirement in 2013, legislators in Southern states still had to get the federal government’s approval for the maps they drew following the 2010 census.

Democracy In Jeopardy
Several states have filed a lawsuit that argues the administration’s decision to include the question violated a federal law that prohibits government agencies from taking “arbitrary and capricious” actions. The states say that the question would not serve the administration’s stated goal, “because an undercount of non-citizens and their citizen relatives will decrease the accuracy of census data” needed to enforce the VRA.

No matter our background or heritage, it is our duty to ensure the systems in place are inclusive and do not suppress any people. Democracy only works when we include everyone in the count and in the process.

Federal funding to each community is based on the census count. If every human is not counted, the entire community suffers.
How Do You Identify Fake News?

Remember when 318 people were shot in Chicago on Halloween 2015 and former President Barack Obama declared a state of emergency in the city? Or when Hillary Clinton ran a child sex-trafficking ring from the basement of a Washington, D.C., pizza parlor? Or when first lady Melania Trump used a body double in public appearances?

All these events received news coverage. All were fake. It’s troubling how much traction false news can get. Like when major news sources splashed headlines over the Trump administration’s claims that Chicago’s gun violence was occurring in a “city with the strongest gun laws in our country.” Not true, either. Local media have countered that claim time and again. The nonpartisan political fact-checker PolitiFact called President Donald Trump’s comments about this “Pants on Fire!” the worst rating on its Truth-O-Meter.

So how do you tell the difference between real and false news? Or, as a CNN commercial about this issue put it, an apple from a banana?

Experts who study media and the rise of misinformation say you should approach all the news you read with a certain level of doubt, said Dan Gillmor, a professor at Arizona State University’s Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication. “Part of what we have to do ourselves is to create an internal speed bump, where we say, ‘Just wait a minute’ before you believe anything,” Gillmor said.

A healthy level of skepticism is key. Prominent political rhetoric right now, including from elected officials, is troublesome, as the president and others sometimes label stories from even the most rigorous news organizations as fake when they’re not.

The more sensational a news item sounds, the more skeptical you should be, Gillmor said. That is no simple task. Journalism that is critical of ideas or figures you already dislike should provoke heightened skepticism, he said, because, “We like it when we see information that confirms our internal beliefs.”

It’s also wise to seek out trustworthy news organizations, though that’s easier said than done in a world in which we often encounter stories on platforms that make their origins unclear and in which unfamiliar and, in some cases, ideologically driven news sources proliferate. Information comes to us from friends, family, co-workers and via algorithms, as well as from websites we visit, TV news we watch and newspapers we read.

“All of that is just one really huge combination of disparate sources, disparate information coming from credible and often incredible places,” said Craig Silverman, media editor at BuzzFeed News, who writes about misinformation. So audiences shouldn’t give all news sources the same weight.

“If (news organizations) are not applying reporting, and they’re not willing to report things that are inconvenient to their perspective, then they’re probably not very reliable,” Silverman said.

False news is also often twisted to present a story that triggers you emotionally, whether that’s anger or sadness, Silverman said. “If they can do that, then the chances of you reacting to it by liking it or retweeting it are much greater.”

So, you need what Silverman Continued on page 13
Transportation Fare Increases on the Table

Scrambling to address a ballooning deficit, state transportation officials are considering fare hikes among other proposals at the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority. Out in western Mass, due to the budget shortfall The Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) is considering service cuts as well as fare hikes.

Starting next fiscal year the MBTA expects its budget shortfall to increase from 70 million to 111 million. To offset this shortfall the MBTA plans to increase parking fees— the state expects to collect 7 million dollars via parking fee revisions. Additionally, the MBTA is seeking to address its budget deficit by generating 6 million dollars from advertisements and 8 million dollars from the “corporate pass program (a program which allows businesses to subsidize their employees’ transit fares).

Despite these revenue generating measures, fare increases are on the horizon for riders. The MBTA officials have made it clear that they do not expect fare increases to begin until 2019, but riders will start to see increases come June 2019, three years after the last increase. Steve Poftak, the board’s vice chairman has stated that “it’s our intent that fare increases would occur on a regular basis and we would not have a prolonged period of time without a fare increase.”

Talks of fare increases also coincide with the MBTA’s new plans to digitize all fare collection and eventually eliminate cash collection on buses. Transportation Secretary Pollack stated, “that new fare-collection technology would make it more “technologically simple” to change fares.

In Western Massachusetts, Mass Senior Action members are also facing fare hikes and service cuts due to budget shortfalls. The Pioneer Valley Transit Authority Sandra Sheehan says this deficit is based on anticipated funding for regional transit agencies from the State, inflation, rising costs, and revenue loss from a ridership decline. The PVTA received $22.9 million in the state budget for this years’ operations, $600,000 less than previous years.

Mass Senior Action members have been active in speaking out at public hearings about the disproportionate impact the proposed service cuts would have on predominantly minority neighborhoods who depend on certain bus routes. (Pictured left) Lorraine Crump Springfield chapter member, said that she’s angry about it, “we don’t all have cars, and great-paying jobs, so we depend on the bus.”

Mass Senior Action understands that from time to time fare increases are necessary to maintain quality of service and support workers. The MBTA’s budget for example, includes new costs like increased pension contributions and debt payments, the launch of commuter rail service to Foxborough, planned bumps in payments to contractors, and scheduled raises that union workers agreed to forgo last year. However, it remains important and crucial that members get involved and speak up about changes to public transportation that would impact their communities.

Thanks to members raising their voices in the past, state law now prohibits the T from raising fares more often than once every two years as well as dictates the T can issue increases of no more than 7 percent. As the MBTA and PVTA move forward with fare increases and technological changes, it is now more important than ever that senior voices at the table to ensure transit remains affordable and accessible to all.
Raise Up Mass: Paid Sick Time Fight Continues

After Raise Up Massachusetts won a 38% raise for nearly half a million workers with a minimum wage hike to $11.00 per hour through the legislature and earned sick time for nearly a million workers on the ballot in 2014, Raise Up Massachusetts is on the cusp of again transforming the Commonwealth’s economy to support working families and to address economic inequality statewide.

As a coalition that brings together over 150 labor, faith, and community organizations, Raise Up is working together to build an economy that works for all of us. To do this, the coalition is organizing three sweeping campaigns that will impact millions of workers and families from Pittsfield to Boston:

The Fair Share Amendment (FSA): This amendment to the State Constitution would create a 4% additional tax on incomes over a million dollars a year and use the revenue to invest in education and transportation.

With your help in 2015, Raise Up collected over 152,000 signatures to move the FSA to the Constitutional Convention. In 2016 and 2017, a Constitutional Convention convened by the MA legislature passed the FSA by over 70% in two consecutive sessions, when only 25% was needed for it to go forward to a vote of the people.

Currently, the FSA is being legally challenged by the corporate lobbyists whose millionaire donors are bankrolling the lawsuit. The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court heard the case on February 5th and are expected to make a decision by early May. Raise Up is confident that legal precedent are on our side and we should plan for a major ballot campaign in 2018 to pass the Fair Share Amendment.

Paid Family Medical Leave and a $15 Minimum Wage: Raise Up is fighting to win a $15/hour minimum wage and Paid Family and Medical Leave; which would give a raise to nearly one million workers and ensure that everyone can take paid time off to take care of a family member, a medical emergency, or to care for a new child.

After a multi-year legislative campaign on these issues, Raise Up MA has begun to move these issues to the ballot, collecting the first round of needed signatures. In fall of 2017, Raise Up organizations collected over 274,000 signatures, far in-excess of what is needed in the first round to take the issues to the ballot.

Currently, Raise Up is organizing a massive campaign operation to use the leverage of the potential ballot questions to win these issues in the legislature. Raise Up is organizing a phone program which has made in excess of 100,000 calls to voters, a comprehensive lobbying program generating letters to leadership, and a statewide community briefing tour with over a thousand of total attendees in Boston, Lawrence, New Bedford, Springfield, and Worcester.

Now, Raise Up invites you to join us to rally and lobby for Paid Family and Medical Leave and a $15 Minimum Wage at the Massachusetts State House! This event will represent the escalation of a multi-year campaign, which was successful in collecting over 272,000 signatures, orchestrating seven legislative forums with over 2,000 attendees, and a statewide phone outreach that talked to over 100,000 people. The Raise Up Massachusetts Congress will be on Tuesday, May 8th, 2018, 1:00PM at the Massachusetts State House, Grand Stair Case, 2nd Floor!

By Raise Up Mass
“Healthcare must be recognized as a right not a privilege. Every, man, woman and child in our country should be able to access the health care they need regardless of their income. The only long-term solution to America’s healthcare crisis is a single-payer national health care program” - Bernie Sanders

A half-century ago, the United States established Medicare. In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed a law that created Medicare and brought a higher level of health security to seniors. This brought comprehensive health benefits to Americans over 65. It has proven to be enormously successful, cost-effective and popular. Now is the time to expand and improve Medicare to cover all Americans.

In Massachusetts, many policy makers are trying to advance a Single Payer bill. An Act establishing Medicare for all (H. 2987 & S. 619) filed by Representative Denise Garlick and Senator James Eldridge, and over 40 co-sponsors seeks to create a single payer system to provide accountability to the Commonwealth health care system in pursuit of universal access to quality, affordable care. This bill would establish a “Massachusetts Health Care Trust, which the single-payer body will be responsible for the collection and disbursement of funds required to provide health care services for every resident of the Commonwealth.” Universal single-payer means comprehensive coverage for all Massachusetts residents.

Under the Obama administration in 2010, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) strengthened and expanded health security in the United States. Currently, more than 17 million Americans have gained health insurance. Millions of low income Americans have gained coverage through expanded Medicaid programs that now exists in 31 states. Young adults can stay on their parents’ health plans until they’re 26. Overall, there has been increased protections against lifetime coverage limits and exclusions from coverage because of pre-existing conditions. The ACA was an important step towards a goal of universal health care but the cost burden continues to blow up. Both insurance companies and the pharmaceutical companies profits soar while working people cannot keep up with monthly premiums let alone co-pays for actual care.

The Massachusetts plan to expand Medicare Coverage is building due in part to the fact health care is unaffordable for both the individual and the state, a new way of doing health care must be considered.

**Senator Sanders, “Healthcare must be recognized as a right not a privilege.”**

Continued on next page 11
Since January, Mass Senior Action has held three leadership workshops for members who are interested in gaining skills to take their engagement to the next level. Seasoned and new members alike appreciate the opportunity to gain new skills and brush up on what they already know. On January 31st there was the New Officers Training where new board members from across the state gathered together to learn skills to build their chapters. On February 20th, there was a public speaking workshop where attendees received tools to be able to speak to different audiences about building senior power. On March 29th, there was a lobbying training where members learned about the importance of making sure senior voices are heard by local and state politicians.

Join us at the next workshop to be the best senior advocate you can be.
TAKE ACTION TODAY TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS!

CALL YOUR STATE LEGISLATORS: 617-722-2000

SCRIPT:

"I am calling you today as a constituent and as an individual member of the Massachusetts Senior Action Council. The Massachusetts Senior Action Council is a statewide, grassroots, senior-led organization that empowers its members to use their own voices to address key public policy and community issues that affect their health and well-being.

As you help shape the fiscal year 2019 state budget, I am asking the (Senator/Representative) to support key housing, homelessness prevention programs, and resources for the Commonwealth's most vulnerable households, including elders. In particular:

1. RAFT (LINE ITEM 7004-9316):
   - Please work to deepen the overall investment in the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) homelessness prevention program by increasing funding to $18.5 million, up from the FY'18 funding level of $15 million, and to maintain the expanded definition of family. Please make sure that $4 million is dedicated to elders, people with disabilities, and youth.

2. EAEDC (LINE ITEM 4408-1000):
   - Please also work to strengthen the Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children (EAEDC) program for households experiencing homelessness and housing instability. EAEDC program participants who are experiencing homelessness, in or out of shelter, receive a reduced grant of only $92.80. This monthly grant is 70% lower than the $303.70 average monthly grant for individuals who have housing. It clearly is insufficient for these participants to meet even their most basic needs. Please work to eliminate the homelessness penalty.

Please let me know the actions (the Senator/Representative) takes. I can be reached at (telephone number/email address)."

FACTS ABOUT ELDER HOMELESSNESS*

*Data provided by HEARTH, 1451 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02118 - www.hearth-home.org

- 33 - Percentage by which elder homelessness is predicted to increase between 2010 and 2020. It is estimated that it will more than double by 2050.
- 40,750 - Estimated number of people in the U.S. age 62 and older who are experiencing homelessness and living in shelters.
- 204,191 - Estimated number of people in the U.S. ages 51-61 who are experiencing homelessness in shelters.
- 0 - Number of U.S. states where the average monthly Social Security payment can cover the rent of a fair market rent one-bedroom apartment.
- The gap between the Massachusetts Economic Security Standard of $27,048 and the median income (excluding SSI and public assistance) of $15,800 is the largest faced by elders anywhere in the United States.

Please join us as we continue to work towards ensuring everyone has a safe and stable place to call home! Questions? Contact Tina Giara, Community Organizer at 781-999-7570 x18 or tinah@mahomeless.org.
Following the passage of The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) several prominent DC lawmakers have begun to call for cuts to social services. Politicians like House Speaker Ryan (WI-R), Representative Mark Meadows (NC-R), and the president have all gone on record stating that entitlement reform and or cuts to social security, medicare, and medicaid are next. Many of their talking points follow a similar logic, due to the deficit, entitlement spending must be cut. According to them, entitlements are bringing down the country and blowing up the debt.

Critics of their plan are quick to attribute the recent explosion in debt to the tax break given to multi-national corporations and the highest of earners. Analysts and the Congressional Budget Office have forecasted a 1.4 trillion increase to the national deficit over the next 10 years from the TCJA.

Impacts will not be felt until 2019. The tax plan puts vulnerable populations—especially, seniors at risk.

For example, analysts predict that by eliminating the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare’s) individual mandate in the tax bill, older Americans ages 50-64 whom do not qualify for Medicare are projected to see their 2019 health care premiums spike by an average of $1500.

Yet, despite proposing cuts to Social Security and Medicare and increasing the deficit, the GOP tax cuts has the potential of benefitting average income seniors in one way—the tax bill allows seniors to deduct a larger portion of their healthcare expenses. The tax cut lowers the criteria for claiming unreimbursed medical expenses from 10% of adjusted gross income to 7.5%. Unfortunately, the 7.5% threshold is only applicable in 2017 and 2018. After, 2018 the deduction reverts back to the 10% floor. Moreover, as many analysts have pointed out few seniors are able to take advantage of this deduction because their medical expenses are not high enough to qualify. Furthermore, while premiums are the largest medical expense for many, premiums are generally not considered deductible health-care expenses.

The one saving grace for supporters and beneficiaries of social security, medicare and medicaid is that cuts to entitlements are incredibly politically unpopular. If Congress tries to enact entitlement reform or cut these cornerstones, Mass Senior Action Council will be there to fight tooth, nail, and cane against these cuts.

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calls “emotional skepticism,” as well.

Fake news creator Jestin Coler knows misinformation tactics well. He was behind prominent fake news sites like the Denver Guardian, which made headlines just days before the 2016 presidential election with a false story about an FBI agent found dead in a murder-suicide after investigating Hillary Clinton’s private email server. Coler recommends examining the “staff” and “contact” pages for legitimate information, as well as double-checking the websites you visit to determine who is behind the site and their agenda. “A common technique in the fake news industry is to create sites that mirror well-known domains/site names but use visual tricks or similar names,” Major tech platforms like Google and Facebook are attempting to help separate fact from fiction after facing criticism for their inaction, but the internet is still, to a large extent, the Wild West. Gillmor, however, is cautiously optimistic. “I hope we’re heading in a better direction,” Gillmor said “But it took a long, long time to dig the hole we’re in. And it’s going to take some time to get out of it.”

By Vignesh Ramachandran
Get On The Bus

MASS SENIOR ACTION COUNCIL
Let Your Voice Be Heard!

Tuesday, June 12, 2018
State House, Boston, MA
19 States have lowered the cost of health care for seniors on Medicare. Why not Massachusetts?

Mass Senior Action Council is proposing legislation to pay for seniors Medicare premiums and co-pays for people living on 28,000 or less per year by using federal dollars with the "Medicare Savings Program". Not new money, just better use of current state dollars.

Free Bus Ride and Free Lunch at the State House!
(from most areas)
RSVP by June 1: 781-864-2596 or pedwards@masssenioraction.org

Donate at: www.MassSeniorAction.org
Bristol chapter members joined community allies to save senior housing in Fall River. Packing the public hearing, flooding the Mayor and City Council with phone calls crying out, “SOS - Save our Seniors and Save Our Homes. The plan was to displace longtime senior residents, demolish senior subsidized housing, and replace it with unaffordable market rental units.

Lynn City Council votes to say “NO!” to bad employers who steal wages from workers. If you want to do business in Lynn, you have to pay workers for the work they perform. Since the unanimous vote other cities are planning to stop wage theft too.
37 Years of Senior Action

Annual Fundraiser and Celebration

Tuesday, June 26, 2018

We are excited to invite you to join us for Massachusetts Senior Action Council’s 37th Anniversary celebration where we will be celebrating our unsung heroes. The event will be held on Tuesday, June 26, from 11:00 am to 2:30 pm at the union hall of 1199SEIU, 108 Myrtle Street, Quincy, MA 02170. (T access & free parking)

lunch, music, and transportation available!

Name: _______________________________
Address: _______________________________ City___________________
Zip:______________
Phone: ____________________________ Email:_____________________

$20.00 ticket for members: How many: _______
$25.00 ticket for non-MSAC members: How many: _____________
$40.00 tickets for those not on a fixed income: How many:________

I cannot attend but would like to donate to MSAC $______________

Mail this form with your check to the address below, or call the number, or buy tickets at www.MassSeniorAction.org

MSAC, 108 Myrtle Street, #112, Quincy, MA 02171  - Phone: 617-284-1234