



# Illinois Alliance *for* Retired Americans

## 2012 Mid-Year Newsletter

### Illinois Alliance to Honor Retired Teacher, Beatrice Lumpkin, at Senior Power Lunch

On October 9, IARA will present Beatrice Lumpkin with the 2012 Jerry Prete award at the annual Senior Power Lunch.

Beatrice has a long history of leadership with both IARA and the labor movement. Beatrice taught for Chicago Public Schools for years and continues to be active with the Chicago Teachers Union. Beatrice also worked alongside her husband, Frank Lumpkin, on the struggles of the United Steel Workers in Chicago. Beatrice remains active with the Southeast Chicago Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees. Bea also currently serves on the IARA Executive Board.

IARA is proud to have Beatrice as a leader and is excited to recognize her leadership over the years.



Illinois Alliance members met with Representative Elaine Nekritz at the lobby day on May 16.

### Illinois Alliance Fights to Save Illinois Cares Rx

On June 14, Governor Quinn signed a bill that cuts \$1.6 billion from state health care programs for seniors, low-income families and people with disabilities, including eliminating Illinois Cares Rx.

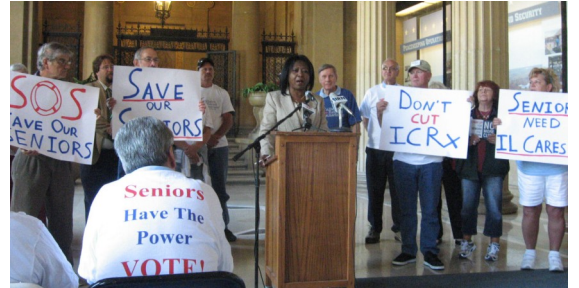
The bill also included a \$1-a-pack increase in the cigarette tax.

Illinois Cares Rx helped over 160,000 seniors and people with disabilities afford their prescription drugs. This fail-safe program was created to ensure that seniors and people with disabilities just above the poverty level would be able to continue to receive necessary medications and not become sicker spending down to get on Medicaid by going into a hospital or nursing home. Illinois Cares Rx is a cost-effective program which saves costs immediately by preventing further acute illness, keeping seniors out of hospitals and nursing homes and from needing to seek more expensive specialty care.

On May 16 and May 22, the Illinois Alliance for Retired Americans held two lobby days in Springfield. Nearly 400 seniors gathered to rally and speak with their legislators about saving Illinois Cares Rx in addition to other programs that affect retirees. On May 16, IARA members and seniors with SEIU Healthcare IL/IN dumped dozens of “Senior Survival Kits” at Governor Quinn’s office door to demonstrate their outrage at the proposed cuts. The attendees then delivered the kits, consisting of a pill bottle, diaper and latex gloves, to each Senator and Representative. On May 22, Representative Mary Flowers joined the Illinois Alliance for a press conference about Illinois Cares Rx. Rep. Flowers said “Out of all of the proposed cuts to state health care programs, the proposed elimination of Illinois Cares Rx would affect the most people. We cannot balance the budget on the back of Illinois’ most vulnerable residents.”

Barbara Franklin, President of the Illinois Alliance, also spoke at the press conference, saying “Eliminating Illinois Cares Rx will disrupt seniors’ already tight budgets and make them candidates for emergency rooms and nursing homes.”

The Illinois Alliance will continue its work to advocate for prescription drug assistance for seniors and people with disabilities in Illinois.



Representative Mary Flowers speaks to the crowd at the lobby day on May 22.



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### Peoria Seniors Demand “Keep Your Mitts Off the Affordable Care Act”

On March 19, to celebrate the second anniversary of the Affordable Care Act, members of the Illinois Alliance in Peoria rallied outside the office of U.S. Representative Aaron Schock to tell the Representative and Mitt Romney to stop advocating for the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, which is helping seniors better afford to see a doctor and fill a prescription. Mitt Romney was in Peoria to attend a fundraising event with Representative Schock.



Beatrice Stratton and IARA President, Barbara Franklin address the rally.

“Of all the lies and confusion that still surround health reform, perhaps the greatest is that the Affordable Care Act is bad for seniors. This is just plain false,” Barbara Franklin, President of the Illinois Alliance for Retired Americans said. In Illinois, the 144,226 seniors with the highest drug costs have already saved over \$96 million on their prescriptions. Just over 800,000 seniors in Illinois have received free, life-saving tests for chronic diseases.

Although the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that the law is constitutional, Franklin said she is worried that these new benefits for Illinois retirees are at risk from what she said are “the three R’s – Repeal, Romney, Ryan.” Ms. Franklin said that corporate-backed efforts to repeal the law would take away these new Medicare benefits from Illinois seniors. Presidential candidate Mitt Romney, U.S. Representative Schock, and U.S. House Budget Committee Chair Paul Ryan (R-WI), not only want to repeal these new benefits, but also replace traditional Medicare with a voucher program. Under this plan, seniors would receive a small voucher, or coupon, to purchase coverage in the expensive, unfair private insurance market.



IARA Organizer, Shirley Forpe, speaks to workshop attendees at the Rockford library.

### IARA Goes On the Road to Set the Record Straight

During this winter and spring, IARA and our wonderful volunteers went on the road with our *Setting the Record Straight* workshop. The workshop busts the myths about Social Security and Medicare by separating fact from fiction.

During the workshop, we first provide a short history of Social Security and Medicare. Next, we present information regarding their value to society, including keeping seniors and people with disabilities out of poverty. The workshop also provides information about the current financial status of Social Security and Medicare to demonstrate that these

programs are financially strong. Lastly, we offer solutions and simple ways for people to get involved in protecting the future of these programs.

This year, we have done the workshop for members of union locals in Aurora and Joliet. We have also presented the workshop at libraries in Elgin, Rockford, Schaumburg and Waukegan for seniors in the community who had never heard of IARA. Additionally, seniors at community centers in Peoria and Aurora attended the workshop.

Please let us know if you would be interested in having an event at your place of worship, local library, residence or union hall. If you supply the people, we will supply the program, literature and treats. For more information contact Emily Stuart at (312) 427-2114 ext. 207 or [illinoisara@gmail.com](mailto:illinoisara@gmail.com).