

## **CLUW Partners with the Coalition to Strengthen Social Security**

President See is proud of CLUW's new realigned subcommittees who reported on their committee's findings and action items during the CLUW Executive Board Meeting on Friday, June 11, 2010 in Dallas, Texas. Maryann Medina, spokesperson for **CLUW's Mature Women's Committee**, reported that this committee encourages CLUW to place protecting Social Security benefits on its agenda as a priority issue. Maryann stated, "this is a working women's issue that impacts young women, who are future beneficiaries of Social Security, as well as those that currently may be impacted if cuts are made." Sister Medina continued by informing the board members that "women represent 57% of all Social Security beneficiaries." The new campaign to strengthen Social Security is a direct response to the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform. Some of the committee members' position is to reduce the deficit by cutting Social Security debt, and it has many Americans furious.

The Coalition to Strengthen Social Security includes, but is not limited to, the AFL-CIO, Alliance for Retired Americans, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, Campaign for America's Future, Economic Policy Institute, Generations United, National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, National Council of Women's Organizations, National Organization for Women, National Women's Law Center, OWL-The Voice of Midlife and Older Women, Social Security Works, and Voices for America's Children, among others, in its fight to strengthen Social Security.

For the year 2010, the Strengthen Social Security Campaign has two major goals. The first goal is to block the Fiscal Commission from achieving 14 votes to cut Social Security and any deficit-reduction legislation. The second goal is to eventually enact Social Security Reform that would improve benefits.

CLUW is calling on its members to spread the word that Social Security did not cause the federal deficit and that consequentially, its benefits should not be cut to reduce the deficit. The campaign strongly believes that Social Security should not be privatized in whole or in part, and it should not be means-tested. The Social Security retirement age, which is scheduled to increase from 65 to 67, should not be raised any further, nor should the benefits of Social Security be reduced. Moreover, benefits should be increased for those who are most disadvantaged.

Social Security is a promise made to all generations. It belongs to the people who worked hard and paid taxes, not to the government. It reflects the best of American values, such as rewarding hard work, honoring parents, and caring for our neighbors, dependent children, and the disabled. Without Social Security, 47% of seniors have an income below poverty and 55% of disabled workers and their families would live in poverty.

On June 26<sup>th</sup>, AmericaSpeaks is hosting town hall meetings in 19 cities around the country to inform citizens on how to dramatically reduce the federal deficit. It is very likely that a call to cut Social Security will be addressed. President See is asking that CLUW members attend these meetings to make our position known. For meeting

locations, you can visit <http://usabudgetdiscussion.org/>. We will also ensure that the Fiscal Commission Members know that we do not want cuts on Social Security. We will show them why this is so imperative, and demand that they support our position. As a partner of the Coalition to Strengthen Social Security, we have signed on as members to stand strong and united in support of the following principles:

- 1) Social Security has a surplus of \$2.6 trillion, which it has loaned to the federal government. Social Security did not cause the federal deficit. Its benefits should not be cut to reduce the deficit.
- 2) Social Security, which has stood the test of time, should not be privatized in whole or in part.
- 3) Social Security is insurance and should not be means-tested. Because workers pay for it, they should receive it regardless of their income or savings.
- 4) Social Security is fully funded for more than 25 years; thereafter it has sufficient funds to meet 75% of promised benefits. To reassure Americans that Social Security will be there for them, Congress should act in the coming few years outside the context of deficit reduction to close this funding gap by requiring those who are most able to afford it to pay somewhat more.
- 5) Social Security's retirement age, already scheduled to increase from 66 to 67, should not be raised further. That would be a benefit cut that places the greatest hardship on older Americans who are in physically demanding jobs, or are otherwise unable to find or keep employment.
- 6) Social Security, whose average benefit is \$13,000 in 2010, provides vital protection against the loss of wages as the result of disability, death, or old age. Those benefits should not be reduced, including by changes to the cost of living adjustment or the benefit formula.
- 7) Social Security's benefits should be increased for those who are most disadvantaged. The benefits, which are very important to virtually all workers and their families, are particularly crucial to those who are disadvantaged.

The Fiscal Commission members will be making a recommendation to Congress after the November election. Their meetings will be open to the public so that we will know each member's position on this crucial issue. These members are:

<b>Fiscal Commission Members</b>		
<b>Appointed by the White House</b>	<b>Appointed by the House</b>	<b>Appointed by the Senate</b>
Alan Simpson (co-chair; fmr. U.S. Senator)	Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI)	Sen. Judd Gregg (R-NH)
Erskine Bowles (co-chair; fmr. WH Chief of Staff)	Rep. Jeb Hensarling (R-TX)	Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK)
Andy Stern (fmr. president of SEIU)	Rep. Dave Camp (R-MI)	Sen. Mike Crapo (R-ID)
Dave M. Cote (CEO, Honeywell International)	Rep. John Spratt (D-SC)	Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL)
Ann M. Fudge (fmr. CEO Young & Rubicam Brands)	Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-CA)	Sen. Max Baucus (D-MT)
Alice Rivlin (Brookings Institution)	Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL)	Sen. Kent Conrad (D-ND)

Additional information on the campaign can be obtained from <http://www.aflcio.org/issues/retirementsecurity/socialsecurity/>, <http://retiredamericans.org>, and <http://womenandsocialsecurity.org>.

On a related matter, the Mature Women's Committee extends a thank you to Katie Jordan for attending a Chicago town hall meeting on Health Care on Tuesday, June 15<sup>th</sup>. The main speaker was U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius on the Affordable Care Act.

CLUW's subcommittee to the Executive Board "Mature Women's Committee" would like to thank you in advance for your assistance in this important campaign.

Maryann Medina, APWU  
 Ella Gordan, AFSCME  
 JoAnn Johntony, OAPSE/AFSCME  
 Judy Beard, Treasurer/Officer Liaison to the Mature Women's Committee

CLUW members, if you're interested in joining the Mature Women's Committee contact Carol Rosenblatt at (202)-508-6969 or [csrosenblatt@cluw.org](mailto:csrosenblatt@cluw.org). Please include your name, union, cell and/or work phone number, email address, and mailing address.