**60 Plus Monthly Email Update**

**May, 2014**

The days are getting longer and politicians are starting to talk a lot faster as we head into the Summer months before the big November election. So much is at stake this year, with 75% of the people highly displeased about the direction of the country, the opportunity has never been better for seniors and working families to make their voices heard and help steer this great nation toward a new course.

As temperatures continue to inch up, a weak economy smothered by an officious, overbearing federal government is still leaving too many Americans out in the cold. There is no better time than now to equip yourself with the tools to stay informed and active in the battle to save our nation's future. We at 60 Plus are proud to join you in this battle, to help educate our friends, family and neighbors for an America heading in the right direction.

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**VA Disaster a Preview of Obamacare's Future**

See if this sounds familiar: A government agency fails the people it is meant to serve. It's dysfunctional, broken, and fails to heed the many warnings concerning its inherent problems. People suffer, and it even becomes an issue of life and death. Politicians promise to fix the mess, but ultimately no one is held accountable.

While Obamacare certainly comes to mind, a much more serious and [flagrant failure of government healthcare is now engulfing the Administration](http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2014/05/18/frustration-grows-calls-for-reform-following-va-backlog-scandal/). The Veterans Administration (VA) has been caught shredding documents at several hospitals to hide its failure to treat U.S. veterans requiring medical care in a timely manner. Some reports claim that dozens of vets died before being cleared to even visit their doctor.

Former Marine Jim Martin, Chairman of 60 Plus, weighed in on the VA mess, "If there is any group of individuals who have earned and *deserve* timely, quality medical care, it is the men and women who have served in our armed forces. Many of their ailments and health problems are a direct result of their service. Yet as the current scandal in the VA shows, even the most deserving can literally "die" on the vine waiting for a government bureaucracy to do its job.

"President Obama is the Commander-in-Chief, and he is the Chief Executive who enforces the laws of the United States. In the midst of this outrage, he has said he is "[mad as hell](http://www.timesdispatch.com/news/latest-news-ap/aide-obama-mad-as-hell-over-va-hospital-allegations/article_7642ed88-dea8-11e3-86dd-001a4bcf6878.html?mode=jqm)" at the VA's failures and subsequent cover-up. Obama was also "[mad, frustrated and angry](http://www.cnn.com/2013/11/14/opinion/borger-obama-clinton/)" about the fiasco surrounding the rollout of the Obamacare website. But getting mad isn't a solution when you're the man in charge. Harry Truman had a sign on his desk that said "The Buck Stops Here." Obama, apparently, has never seen the buck.

"For those who have yet to connect the dots from government involvement in healthcare to longer waiting lines, reduced care and, yes, even an early death, perhaps the failure at the VA will finally open some eyes. Politicians on both sides of the aisle now claim to be equally "outraged" given the sheer size of this story, but what will they actually do about it?"

Obamacare is unquestionably government-run healthcare. While its supporters will cry 'foul' at that statement and attempt to claim that Americans still patron private insurance companies and physicians, the fact remains that the federal government is setting all the rules and costs, courtesy of a 2,300 page law and its 9,000 pages - and growing - of federal regulations. There is no doubt that every medical checkup and procedure going forward under Obamacare puts a massive federal bureaucracy right there in the doctor's office, scrutinizing every penny, just as there is no doubt that these avalanche of rules are causing doctors to consider early retirement, which will certainly hurt Americans' access to care.

The VA has seen its budget more than double over the past eight years, yet that hasn't helped. When government talks about spending more to solve a problem, it never helps because it is still the government managing things. No amount of money can fix bureaucracies that at their core are ill-equipped to serve the needs of private individuals. As Obamacare costs continue to skyrocket to mask inefficiencies and bad law, you can just remember the results of the VA.

Added Martin, "It is sad and disheartening to see America's heroes treated this way. The same President who promised us we "could keep our doctor, period" [told the vets back in 2009 that he would "slash" waiting times for veterans seeking care](http://www.nationalreview.com/article/378233/lessons-va-scandal-john-fund). A broken government system will never be fixed by more money, more promises, or more phony outrage. America needs to take a good look at the VA scandal, as that will soon be par for the course for the entire nation's healthcare system. And if Obamacare is not repealed and replaced, then the only ones we should be mad at is ourselves for letting this happen."

**The Government Shutdown Disaster That Wasn't**

Even the boy who cried wolf is embarrassed by this one. After President Obama, the Democrats in Washington and the entire news media warned of "devastation" and "dire consequences" of the government shutdown resulting from the 2011 sequestration deal, it turns out that in the end, the shutdown resulted in the loss of one government job. One.

With a federal government payroll of 2.7 million non-military employees spread across 23 agencies, the March 2013 sequestration led to the loss of one bureaucratic job, which happened in the office of the U.S. Parole Commission, according to an audit performed by the Government Accounting Office (GAO). This was after Obama repeatedly said sequestration would lead to the loss of "hundreds of thousands of middle class jobs," and going even farther was Senate Majority Leader, Democrat [Harry Reid of Nevada, who said "1.6 million jobs" had already been lost.](http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2014/05/07/despite-doomsday-predictions-sequester-cuts-only-led-to-1-layoff-in-2013/)

Said 60 Plus President Amy Frederick, "Senator Reid was only off by 1,599,999 jobs in his scare tactics. And these are the people we are trusting to run the government? If anything it shows just how wedded some in Washington are to the idea that if government has less money to spend, by definition it will be a disaster."

Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) demanded answers, asking why the Administration was repeatedly telling Americans that sequestration would put thousands of teachers, police, firefighters and other emergency workers on the unemployment line.

*"Despite relentless warnings about the dire consequences of sequestration’s budget cuts, it appears sequestration resulted in only one layoff. While that’s good news for federal employees and other workers, it is devastating to the credibility of Washington politicians and administration officials who spent months – and millions of dollars – engaging in a coordinated multi-agency cabinet-level public relations campaign to scare the American people. "*

Added Frederick, "Senator Coburn is exactly right, the Administration and big-government politicians did embark on a campaign to scare the American people. And given how badly their judgment and honesty were exposed through this sad episode, they succeeded."

**Seniors Say "STOP" to EPA Plan to Raise Energy Prices**

The sad reality with Obama's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is that they seem incapable of doing anything that doesn't take more money out of Americans' pockets. Under the guise of "protecting" the environment, the EPA continues to issue stricter rules on America's power plants that serve to both limit the amount of power our nation can produce, and send costs skyward.

As one current example of the EPA's reckless environmental extremism, they are now proposing [emissions rules on oil refineries that will cost energy producers $40 million per year](http://dailycaller.com/2014/05/16/epa-cracks-down-on-oil-refineries-without-offering-any-public-health-benefits/) to implement, and the EPA can't even tell us if there is any public health benefit to this massive new expense. Such is the arrogance of an unaccountable government agency that fanatically follows an agenda of no actual benefit to the public it is supposed to serve.

Americans know that stricter standards with little to no public benefit serve only to make us all pay more for energy, which is especially crippling to the tens of millions of vulnerable seniors on diminishing incomes who pay a disproportionate share of their monthly expenses for utilities.

[60 Plus Chairman Jim Martin has engaged the EPA](http://60plus.org/seniors-group-opposes-new-epa-standards-that-will-make-all-pay-more-for-utilities/) on another proposed environmental regulation on greenhouse gases that promises to do nothing but shut down coal plants, putting families out of work and making us all pay a bigger monthly electric bill. Martin submitted comments as part of the review process the agency must conduct, warning them of the heavy impact new rules will have on seniors.

Said Martin, “Of special concern to me, and the millions of seniors we represent, is the continued and artificially high price of electricity most Americans pay every day. Any increase in the price of electricity or natural gas is harmful to seniors. Seniors on fixed or diminishing incomes especially pay a disproportionate share of their modest income for utilities, and I believe our nation ought to take every reasonable step within its power to enhance our supply of safe and secure energy.

“Existing EPA rules are already driving up the costs of natural gas and electricity prices. The new rule will only exacerbate the problem and send the utility bills of seniors and families skyward. What our nation needs and struggling Americans deserve is more energy abundance to lower prices, not more rules from Washington. Preserving and growing the contribution of coal-based electricity is the surest and most reliable to deflate electricity prices.

“This is also an issue of life or death for many elderly. Higher utility bills during times of brutal cold and heat often lead to tragedies of seniors dying in their homes or being hospitalized during extreme weather, unable to pay their utility bill. Promoting, not destroying, projects that create an abundance of reliable electric generating capacity for our nation is critical to America’s seniors, not just because it affects their pocketbooks, but for reasons of life and death.

“Seniors cannot state more strongly our opposition to stricter EPA rules that not only negatively impact our nation’s economy, but adversely affect the quality of life and the very health of our nation’s most vulnerable citizens.”

**Jim Martin: A Sugary Sweet Lesson on Consumer Freedom**

Seniors young enough to remember rationing during WWII may see a repeat of the dark days of staple shortages if some get their way. Some liberal consumer advocates are pushing for higher sugar taxes as a way to make Americans consume less, which would make Americans pay more for nearly all food, with higher prices leading to less availability and fewer choices on store shelves. There's a word for that, it's called 'rationing.'

60 Plus Chairman Jim Martin believes the government doesn't belong in the grocery store aisle or our kitchens, telling us what we can and cannot buy and consume, and pushed back against the liberal plan with a front-and-center editorial published in the influential *Washington Times*.

Martin argues that American consumers need an advocate in the battle over the price and availability of foods, and policies that keep food prices steady, without huge spikes that can send the family budget into a tailspin. Instead of yet more taxes, Martin said policy makers should support the "Zero-for-Zero" proposal of Rep. Ted Yoho (R) of Florida, that eliminates foreign subsidies on staples such as sugar that cause huge distortions and instability in food prices.

Said Martin, "That liberals are so eager to dictate to Americans what they should and should not do is nothing new, but regulating the food staples in our cupboards is crossing a line that puts America eerily on par with nations such as Soviet-era Russia. Policy remedies like “Zero-for-Zero” are the answer to all kinds of policy woes because they put consumers first, they demand free and fair trade across borders, and they keep greedy government hands from dipping into the sugar bowl." You can read Martin's full commentary [here](http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/may/1/martin-a-sweet-lesson-on-consumer-freedom/#ixzz32IhRP3dp).

**Sen. Marco Rubio Fights for Seniors' Income**

It's no secret that the economy under the current Administration has been especially brutal to America's seniors and retirees, who have watched their assets slip away and continue to experience diminishing incomes. What's worse, Uncle Sam continues to tax seniors as if they were Warren Buffett's private secretary.

The plight of America's seniors prompted Florida Republican Senator Marco Rubio to introduce legislation titled, [*Let Seniors Work Act of 2014*](http://www.rubio.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/files/serve/?File_id=31036940-510a-47b8-b729-7450532508bd) which encourages seniors who wish to work past the retirement age by eliminating the 12.4 percent Social Security payroll tax and repealing the Retirement Earnings Test (RET).

Said Sen. Rubio, "While our economy is rapidly changing, retirement programs and savings plans have failed to adjust accordingly. Currently, seniors who have already paid their fair share into Social Security are being punished for choosing to keep working rather than immediately cashing in."

60 Plus Chairman Jim Martin expressed his support of the legislation, saying, "On behalf of more than seven million senior citizen activists, the 60 Plus Association thanks you for working to protect America’s seniors with your sponsorship of the Let Seniors Work Act of 2014.

"Across the nation, between 26.2% and 36.8% of seniors are still at least partially employed – either because they want to stay in the workforce – or they can’t afford not to work!

Often, workers between ages 62 and 65 are shocked to discover that in 2014 under the Retirement Earnings Test, if their wages exceed $15,480, their benefits are halved for every $2 they earn above that amount. That’s over and above all the other taxes that they are paying out---including the payroll tax!  And under the current Social Security Payroll Tax system, seniors who continue to work past age 65 are penalized 12.4%.

"With the recession, many of America’s workers have been forced out of their jobs, and retirement savings have been wiped out.  It is deeply alarming that many seniors aren’t able to afford basic retirement expenses, and find they must work, at least part-time, to supplement their Social Security income.

"The reforms outlined in your bill will provide incentives for seniors to stay in the workforce, improving their economic stability and reducing their dependency on Federal assistance programs.

"Thank you Senator Rubio for your efforts to preserve financial security by repealing the Retirement Earnings Test and eliminating the Social Security Payroll Tax for America’s seniors."

***The Great Withdrawal, a* Book Too Important to Ignore**

Every once in a while a book comes along that says something so important that it tilts the political landscape and entirely reshapes the discussion concerning the future of our nation. Not since Thomas E. Woods' [*Rollback*](http://www.amazon.com/Rollback-Repealing-Government-Before-Collapse/dp/1596981415/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1400453076&sr=8-1&keywords=rollback) chronicled how liberal, redistributionist policies in the housing industry led to the 2008 economic crisis has there been a book on failed government policies as important as Craig R. Smith's [*The Great Withdrawal*](http://www.amazon.com/The-Great-Withdrawal-Progressives-Debasement/dp/0989847101/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1400202776&sr=8-1&keywords=the+great+withdrawal). *Withdrawal* is required reading for every American who understands that our nation is heading in the wrong direction and wants to do something about it while there is still time.

As a microcosm of America's ills, the author directs our attention to the current plight of Detroit, and the liberal policies that began 100 years ago and put government growth and power on steroids at the expense of the commonwealth that was once the prerogative of individual citizens and private organizations. Once a proud, thriving metropolis--not to mention an icon of America's worldwide dominance in industry and the home of the automobile--Detroit is now in ruins, and literally bankrupt. One irrefutable truth regarding Detroit's descent into the abyss is its dominance and control by one party and one ideology; Democrats and their pro-labor, nanny state liberal progressivism.

It's a story we think we know, but until Smith came along we were barely scratching the surface. Operating solely under the ideology of liberal progressives, Detroit cemented its reputation as an ungovernable nightmare whose greatest export became more than one million residents fleeing the city limits. It now stands as America's strongest public symbol of corruption, crime, incompetence, failure, greed and despair, where policies did the most damage to those it had promised to help.

Meanwhile, President Obama and the Democrats admit not only have they learned nothing from the colossal failures and bankruptcies of the inner-cities they have managed the past century, but they continue to push these same policies on a national level, with unsustainable debt, anti-business laws that choke the free-market, an astonishing growth in welfare and other assorted government handouts, and government command and control of nearly every aspect of our lives, as we've seen in crystal clarity with Obamacare. But unlike the residents of Detroit, when these policies are implemented across the nation, there will be nowhere for us and future generations to flee.

*The Great Withdrawal* has earned a prominent spot in the small library nestled within the 60 Plus main office. It deserves a spot on the bookshelf in every American home, where its powerful lessons should be a rallying cry within our own communities, and within every polling booth.

**Pat Boone Roasted on His 80th Birthday**

He's known as one of the very nicest, humblest, and most generous people in the world of show business. So what *bad* things can someone possibly say about legendary entertainer (and 60 Plus National Spokesman) Pat Boone? We will soon find out on June 1st, when Pat will be the subject of a celebrity roast on his 80th birthday.

Numerous celebrities including Larry King, Shirley Jones, Rich Little, Norm Crosby and Jon Voight, will be [headlining the Pat Boone Roast](p://westsidetoday.com/2014/05/15/celebs-poke-fun-pat-boone-birthday-roast-help-families-brain-injured-loved-ones/) with all proceeds going to the Ryan Corbin Foundation, a charity that helps families pay for hospitals bills and rehabilitation associated with brain injuries. Ryan is Pat's grandson, who has been recovering the past 13 years from a fall that led to severe physical and brain injuries. Thankfully, Ryan has made tremendous progress, and the Boone family has raised over $1 million to help other families facing the same hardship.

Aside from wondering what the roasters will say about Pat, the hardest thing to believe is that the "original American idol" is turning 80! Yet Pat still maintains the energy and enthusiasm of the crooning teenager who took home the top prize on the Ted Mack Original Amateur Hour and Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts more than 60 years ago. With a full plate of concerts and appearances, Pat and his bride of 60 years, Shirley, remain as active as ever.

Pat received a special message from his friend and 60 Plus Chairman Jim Martin:

"Happy 80th to Patand a special hello to Shirley, his lady love! Pat- you have honored our more than seven million seniors at 60 Plus by serving as our National Spokesman--and we may change our name to 80 Plus!  What an inspiration you are to all ages!"

**See you next month!**