

MEA-Retired Tribune

June 2013

VOC FORMS REQUIRE A MUST RESPOND

Blue Cross Blue Shield has begun to send out the Verification of Coverage forms to Medicare members. Some members have already received the form, so you should be receiving yours within the next three weeks. You **MUST** respond by July 15, 2013. If you do not respond, your Retirement System coverage will be cancelled on September 1, 2013.

DID YOU KNOW?

The 33 MEA-Retired members you elected to represent you will attend the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting and the NEA Representative Assembly June 28-July 6 in Atlanta Georgia.

- More Michigan's seniors, especially the most frail, may be among the first to feel the effects of the gridlock in Washington that has led to across-the-board budget cuts. A statewide hit of about \$2.4 million, among other things, means fewer free and low-cost meals throughout the state — both in home-delivered lunches and those served at senior centers, recreation sites and senior housing complexes. (Detroit Free Press.)
- The House and Senate this week passed education funding bills that provide slight increases for K-12 schools, community colleges and universities — but still fall short of providing proper funding for public education. The state's lowest-funded districts will see an increase of \$60 per pupil, while the wealthiest districts will get a \$30 increase. Other districts will receive proportional increase between \$30 and \$60 per pupil.

YOU ARE INVITED **Michigan Alliance for Retired Americans** **Meeting**

Wednesday June 19, 2013

11:00 a.m.

UAW Region 1D Hall

3300 Leonard – NE

Grand Rapids, MI 49526

Please RSVP to Beckie Bridgewater

at rbridge@uaw.net or call

313-926-5640

Annual Sign-up for PAC (AFT)

Last week the Senate passed SB 283, a bill to eliminate the onerous requirement that PAC contributors have to be asked annually if they wish to continue contributing to that PAC. This law was enacted by Republicans under Governor John Engler's urging, as he had seen it as a way to reduce political fundraising by labor unions. Turned out that business PACs also found it a great burden.

Bob Dole: GOP should be ‘closed for repairs’

By Lyndsey Layton, Published: May 26, 2013

The Republican Party has changed so drastically in recent years, the current GOP wouldn't welcome the likes of Ronald Reagan, former Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole former Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole (R). (Associated Press) said.

The current GOP ought to be “closed for repairs” because it lacks a vision and is unable to strike deals with Democrats, Dole said during an appearance on “Fox News Sunday.” The Kansas Republican said he was disturbed by his party's obstructionist behavior on Capitol Hill. “It seems almost unreal that we can't get together on a budget or legislation,” he said. Asked whether he would be welcomed by the Republican Party today, Dole said, “I doubt it. Reagan wouldn't have made it, certainly Nixon wouldn't have made it, because he had ideas. We might have made it, but I doubt it.”

Dole said his party needs stronger leadership. “Somebody has to stand up and say, ‘We're not going to do this,’” he said.

Progress Michigan Introduces “Skunks Works” Mascot to Mackinac Policy Conference

Citizens' watchdog group Progress Michigan introduced Pepé Le Voucher, the mascot for Gov. Rick Snyder's secret “Skunk Works” school voucher workgroup, to attendees of the Mackinac Policy Conference on Mackinac Island on Wednesday.

Members of Snyder's administration had been holding secret meetings with corporations to develop a school voucher plan for Michigan. The group purposefully excluded educators from its discussions, which centered on weakening public education for the benefit of the information technology corporations that would step in to “rescue” schools and make huge profits.

Pepé passed out “privatization stinks” air fresheners to Lansing insiders as they landed via ferry onto the Island. Progress Michigan and others are encouraging the governor to stop his secret work groups and clear the air by increasing transparency in state government.

“Something stinks, and it's time for Governor Snyder to come clean about just how deep this goes,” said Jessica Tramontana, communications director with Progress Michigan. “Secret emails have showed that senior administration officials were involved in ‘Skunk Works’ from Day One — and it's no secret how much they dislike professional educators. Education reform should be discussed in a public forum with input from teachers, not at a ritzy weekend conference on Mackinac Island. It's time for the governor to follow through on his campaign promises of increased transparency in state government.”

Attendees of the high-dollar conference, organized by the Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce, will hear from Snyder, former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, and StudentsFirst founder Michelle Rhee on their corporate-backed agenda to attack school employees and undermine public education.