



United States Senator (Ret.)

WYOMING

May 25, 2012

Max Richtman  
President & CEO  
National Committee to Preserve Social Security & Medicare  
10 G Street, NE, Suite 600  
Washington, DC 20002-4215

Dear Max,

I read your letter of May 24, 2012 and was highly intrigued by it. I remember well when you were involved with the Veterans organizations you used to sarcastically hammer and savage me regularly and I remember it very well. So I can't really see you giving me too much counsel and advice about civility and harshness, and all the rest of that.

But you need to hear the full the story Max – you seldom do any more than just get a deep gut reaction and lash out about things – just as you always have. You're a fighter, a scrapper, tough, ornery, impatient, and highly emotional. I know those traits! So enclosed (and attached via email) are copies of the "flyer" that went out, and a full copy of my reply.

I also attach a copy of a missive from Colin Sword, a chap who heard of my remarks. Nearly everything in there is untrue. For one thing, I was not in DC under President Johnson. I had nothing to do with that. If anybody can't yet understand what is honestly happening with the Trust Fund – and that nobody "stole" any of it – then here are some articles on that to help clarify. How can any caring person sit aside when the Trustees – in a unanimous report – all Democrats and Republicans – are telling the people of America that in the year 2033 – instead of 2036 (they moved it all up three years in one year!) – that they will waddle up to the pay window and get a check for 25% less? What's honest or fair about that Max?

I spent my entire public life trying to put Social Security back together and make it solvent for over 75 years. Why don't you help? Why don't your pals at CARA help? If anybody still can't understand what we are trying to do for Social Security, then read the Moment of Truth report, and it's all in there (<http://momentoftruthproject.org/report>). We take care of the poor people in society, giving the lower 20% a 125% of poverty – and we give the "older old" an extra 1% kick a year up to 85 years of age. Come on Max – let's get honest and real with each other. You know damn well that the system was never created as a "retirement" – it was an "income supplement" to take care of folks working in CCC camps and who lost everything in the Great Depression. Life expectancy then was 63, that's why they set the retirement age at 65. Now life expectancy is 78.1, and it will be 80 in 2 years. You know those things. Novelli knows those things. Rand knows those things. Rother knows those things. And you guys just keep ducking and moving like punch drunk fighters.

Some in that group of CARA were nice enough to say that Bowles and I were going to try to “privatize” Social Security. We’ve never said one damn word about that. That’s called lying – maybe they or you would call it a “terminological inexactitude.” I call it a lie.

If you have guys in your outfit who are still talking about “stealing the Social Security Trust Fund,” and “balancing the budget on the backs of poor old Seniors,” – and who will therefore let this extraordinary system go down the tubes, then you have no respect from me. Where were you when they took the precious payroll tax – “the life stream of Social Security” – from 6.2% down to 4.2%? I didn’t hear a peep out of you. I didn’t hear a peep out of your organization either – except when I got a whole ration of mail from some of your people – they said they were “urged” – obviously stimulated by you (thinking I was still in the Senate) and several of your fine and stalwart membership then referred to me as a “Nazi pig fucker.” How does that fit your new civility index?! I’ve been called everything in the book by old folks, 70 years and over, usually juiced up by you or the AARP – and yet those people won’t be affected one damn bit by what we’re doing – oh, the “rich” might cough up a little more but the “poor” will be better off. Does that irritate you?

So, with guys like Colin Sword, and you out there pumping up the troops, we’ll just see where we go, but I can tell you one thing, in Erskine and my travels through the United States, people are damn tired of B.S. and mush, and that’s all they’re getting out of the AARP and the National Committee to Preserve Social Security & Medicare, and the Grey Panthers, and the Silver-Haired Legislators, and Grover Norquist, and any Republican or Democrat or Presidential candidate who will continue to stand on their hind legs and say, “We can get this terrible problem solved . . . .” (\$16 trillion in debt, \$1.6 trillion deficit – (for every buck we spend, we borrow \$0.42 cents) – comes to \$3.6 billion a day! – and every penny that came into the treasury in 2011 went out to pay for only three programs and was exhausted while going only to Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security, and we therefore borrowed to run two wars, homeland security, education, R&D, infrastructure and all the rest of the activities of your federal government.

So if they lay all this out and then say: “We can promise you we can take care of this monstrous debt, deficit and interest without touching precious Medicare, precious Medicaid, precious Social Security and precious Defense” you better stick your finger down your throat and know that you are dealing with a phony, a faker, a fraud. How’s that sound Max? Pretty real?

After you’ve digested all this stuff, then you’ll pretty well know that I’m tired of the stuff that I get – generated usually through your organization or the AARP. I’m damn tired of it, for I had a rule when I was in public life – “an attack unanswered is an attack believed.” And when I get too much of that, I bristle – as you well know! And I never lost an election. People thirst for Truth and it is now simply all about math.

Yes, I could clean up my language a little, but I’ve found sometimes that if you use gentle little terms – and I know a bit of lovely Shakespearean English – that people just don’t seem to really hear it. They do seem to hear it when I use the term “bullshit” and I certainly hear it when I get

called a "Nazi pig-fucker," and a "fucking moron" and an "asshole" and a "shithead" – all generated by many fine officers and members of the Senior groups.

And finally Max, you ought to actually read what we have been saying about Social Security, so then you can call off your nasty little members who have shared with me those dazzling comments I have shared above. You do a total disservice to America with your organization because you refuse to deal with the math and the facts, and you know damn well what we have to do to shore up Social Security but since you make money pretty good by juicing up the troops, you're not about to buy a bit of it. What a sad commentary from a guy like you who I have always known as a true zealot (one who having forgotten his purpose, redoubles his efforts!) – but who also can be a pretty good egg at times! It's a lot of fun – and I don't need to take anymore of the crude crap and so I'll just keep shoveling it back.

I told a guy from AARP the other day – and I'll tell your group – if you would like me to meet with your governing Board, I would love to do so, and there would be no staff present, and I'll bring no staff (I don't have any anyway!!) That is an invitation I gave to the AARP and I've heard nothing. So I'll extend it to you too! You let me meet with your Board, your elected Board – the good people you bring on from all around the United States because they are damn good people – and I'll visit with them without you or anybody else in the room, and I won't have anybody with me. How's that for a deal? Should be an eye opener that ought to open an honest dialogue, Max. I'm ready. Call me.

Take care pal. Your worthy adversary is still out here, and you're still pretty good at it too!

Regards and most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive 'R' followed by a horizontal line that curves upwards at the end, resembling a '5' or 'S'.