



“Challenging People to Shape a Better Future Now”

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Alzheimer's Disease: It's Time

Every 69 seconds, someone in America develops Alzheimer's disease. Currently there are an estimated 5.4 million Americans with Alzheimer's, which could grow to 16 million by 2050. In Oregon, about 76,000 people have Alzheimer's, as well as over 162,000 unpaid family caregivers. For these caregivers, increased stress leads to more health problems, time providing care leads to less time for work, family or their own interests, and many are financially devastated. As the boomers turn 65 and we continue to see the rate of Alzheimer's increasing, we will be facing a crisis.

We need to take action now to avert this crisis. We need to set a goal for where we want to be and then determine how best to get there. If we don't do this, we will see insurance rates skyrocket, Medicare and Medicaid drained, and millions more families suffering needlessly.

There is some good news. Plans are being created to address the Alzheimer's crisis at both the national and Oregon levels. Congress unanimously passed the National Alzheimer's Project Act last year, which requires the creation of a national plan for Alzheimer's. This effort is up and running, and people can provide input and follow the progress by

PUBLIC HEALTH

Jon Bartholomew

going to napa.alz.org.

Here in Oregon, the Alzheimer's Association is partnering with state legislators, non-profit organi-

care and services to people living with Alzheimer's and their families. In short, this plan is to make Oregon "dementia ready".

November is National Alzheimer's Awareness Month, but I'd ask you to be more than aware – be active and engaged. There will be a town hall meeting

connected to this town hall call to provide your input on what you think needs to be done to fight Alzheimer's and ensure quality care and services for people impacted by it.

In these tough times, we know that government budgets and family budgets are stretched thin. We believe that together we can meet the needs of people impacted by Alzheimer's while saving money. More funding for research now can save billions of dollars in costs in the future. Effective training programs for caregivers can lead to fewer doctor visits for them. Better coordination of services will save taxpayers money. These are all things that can and should be part of the national and state plans for Alzheimer's.

Alzheimer's is the next big public health issue to tackle. As a society, we need to come together, discuss the issues openly, and make sure we're prepared to deal with it. We know we can solve major puzzles when we devote resources to them, like sending a man to the moon or finding effective treatments for AIDS. Now is the time for us to turn our attention to Alzheimer's.

Jon Bartholomew is Public Policy Director of the Alzheimer's Association Oregon Chapter

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zations, government agencies, scientific and academic researchers, memory care providers, individual

via telephone on November 10th to gather public input on what should be in the Oregon plan for

caregivers, and others to craft a "State Plan for Alzheimer's Disease in Oregon". This plan will help ensure effective and efficient

Alzheimer's. If you RSVP on the Alzheimer's Association website (www.alz.org/oregon) or by calling 503-416-0202, you can be

Who's Watching the Supercommittee?

When President Obama signed the Budget Control Act of 2011, he committed our nation to a budget-cutting process that may well be cumbersome. The "Supercommittee", or the Joint Select Committee on Budget Reduction, has a hard timeline of Nov. 23 to propose some \$1.5 trillion in cuts. If Congress does not pass the Supercommittee proposals, then an automatic trigger will cut the budget across the board by about nine percent.

I suppose the thinking behind creating the Supercommittee, composed of six Democrats and six Republicans, is that 12 minds are better than 535. The size of the committee may also make it easier for lobbyists: According to Politico, more than 200 lobbyists are pressuring Supercommittee members to protect their interests. Who will protect the interests of young people, especially those who attend HBCUs? Already, students have been hard hit by budget machinations. Beginning July 1, 2012, students will no longer receive an interest subsidy on their undergraduate and graduate student loans. Before now, while studying, student loans were interest-free, with interest kicking in only when they began repayment. No more. That will save about \$18 billion in the next decade, but at what cost? It is ironic that on one hand, President Obama wants our nation to again lead the world in the percentage of people who are college graduates, and at the same time, yet another hurdle is being imposed on those who want to go to college.



BENNETT COLLEGE

Julianne Malveaux

For now, it appears that the Pell Grant of \$5,500 for low-income students remains intact. However, the Supercommittee is looking for places to cut, and they are looking everywhere. Absent lobbyists, we will all have to lobby to protect the

Democrats on the Supercommittee. However, will they be able to withstand both the Republican zeal to reduce the size of government or the automatic triggers that will take place if the Supercommittee can't find compromise?

It is also likely that Title III funding, which is specifically targeted to HBCUs, will be on the chopping block. Earlier this month several UNCF presidents met with members of the Congressional Black Caucus to talk about ways that Title III money can be protected. Those

include Xavier Becerra (D-CA), Jim Clyburn (D-SC) and Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Fred Upton (R-MI) and David Camp (R-MI).

When you scour the headlines, you won't find much written about the Supercommittee, even though they are in the throes of meetings and negotiations. We can expect Democrats to protect entitlements and Republicans to resist tax increases, and these are sure ingredients for an impasse. When the Supercommittee was formed critics from both the left and the right talked about the possibility of it deadlocking, as in order to attain a simple majority, somebody will have to cross party lines. The last time we faced a budget impasse, we ended up with a reduction in our Standard and Poor's rating from AAA to AA+. When it cut our nation's rating, S&P said their prognosis for the long-term fiscal health of the United States was "poor".

The Supercommittee may well be out of the news, but it should not be off our radar screen. The dozen members are making decisions that will have long-term consequences. They may well decide to tackle aspects of our tax structure, and they will certainly decide to cut some, if not all, federal programs. We must all ensure that the Supercommittee will not reduce the deficit on the backs of the poor and the powerless, especially our students.

Julianne Malveaux is President of Bennett College for Women in Greensboro, NC.

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students who do not have the resources of the health care industry, legal associations, and those other 200 crowding Capital Hill. To be sure, many of the Supercommittee members are committed to education. Congressman James Clyburn (D-SC), for example, is the only Congressional Black Caucus member on the Supercommittee. He has long been a friend of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). He is likely to find allies among other

who care about HBCUs must lobby not only CBC members and Congressional Representatives in areas where HBCUs are located, but also any and every voter, especially those on the Supercommittee. The Committee is co-chaired by Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) and Congressman Jeb Hensarling (R-TX), and includes Senators Max Baucus (D-MT), John Kerry (D-MA), John Kyle (R-AZ), Rob Portman (R-OH), and Pat Toomey (R-PA). Congressional representatives

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