

# CARA Accomplishments over the Last 10 Years

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*CARA has become the leading, grassroots, progressive movement for seniors in California, representing over 950,000 seniors through our 225+ affiliated organizations. Some highlights over the last ten years include:*

## **Protecting and Expanding Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid**

- Developed a “Know Your Rights” brochure about Medicare Part D and distributed over 100,000 to seniors in several languages.
- Conducted an outreach and education plan to present the part D plan to over 100 senior groups and engage them in efforts to win real prescription drug benefits.
- Sponsored demonstrations at Congressman Bill Thomas’ office (was Chair of House Ways and Means) in Bakersfield with over 200 people from around the State against the Medicare Part D plan which he helped to draft and get passed.
- Worked in coalition with over 30 senior and low income advocacy organizations to win a Part D Safety Net program for the dual eligibles.
- Organized a petition drive, collecting over 25,000 signatures asking Congress to reconsider and replace the Part D plan. Delivered the petitions to Senators Feinstein and Boxer on a cable car, singing “Medi-carols”.
- Organized several demonstrations with more than 5,000 people over the years at Senator Feinstein’s office where we delivered thousands of postcards, personal stories, and testimony against the Part D plan, and to protect Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.
- Collected thousands of personal stories about Social Security and produced a pamphlet containing many of these and delivered them to Senator Feinstein.
- Held over 40 Town Hall Meetings on Social Security across the State to explain the threats, enlist support of Congressmembers and engage the public.
- Sponsored dozens of Social Security and Medicare Birthday Parties over the years to celebrate these important programs and organize against attempts to cut and privatize them.
- Held several demonstrations at Congressman Pombo’s office in Stockton, urging him to change his position on privatizing Medicare and Social Security. Pombo was eventually voted out of office – in part because of his position on these issues.
- Generated over 50,000 calls to Senator Feinstein’s local and national offices in several Statewide call-in days.
- Recruited seniors in every Congressional district to deliver letters on the first day of the Deficit Commission hearings opposing cuts to Social Security and Medicare.
- Sponsored the “Medicare 8” sit-in at Senator Feinstein’s office, to demand that she stand up against cuts to Social Security.
- Over 400 activists met Bowles and Simpson with informational pickets in Monterrey and Oakland to present the truth about their deficit reduction proposals that include cuts to Social Security and Medicare.
- After receiving a hateful letter from Alan Simpson about our picket, conducted a national media effort that put CARA in over 100 newspapers, blogs, radio stations and online media outlets including Politico, Huffington Post, CNN, and others.
- Expanded our outreach, action, and on-going advocacy on Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid with the disability and immigrant communities including independent living centers, regional centers, In Home Supportive Services public authorities, homecare consumers and workers.
- Spearheaded the national day of action against



the Chained CPI on July 2, 2013 with 50 cities participating, including huge demonstrations in San Francisco and Los Angeles.

#### **Fighting for a Fair State Budget with New Revenues (NO MORE CUTS)**

- Major partner in action and strategy on State budget issues with the Health and Human Service Network Budget Coalition.
- Highlighted CARA spokespeople in dozens of press events on new revenue and against cuts in legislative districts around the State.
- Collected hundreds of personal letters against cuts in the budget.
- With the HHS Budget Network, participated in weekly lobby days against cuts, and with our Wizard of Oz theme (have a heart, courage, and a brain – vote against cuts).
- Collected over 2500 signatures to help put the Millionaires Tax on the ballot in November 2012 and spoke at hundreds of senior centers and other organizations about the need to pass Proposition 30 and oppose Proposition 32.
- With the passage of Prop 30, have refocused our efforts with the HHS budget network to demand that we restore some of the programs that were cut in previous years, and work to rebuild California's infrastructure and reinvest in our future, participating in local rallies, legislative visits, and hearings and events in Sacramento.
- Recruited hundreds of seniors to work on the SICKO leafleting campaign, where over 350,000 flyers on single payer and health care reform were given to movie goers to learn what they can do to fix our broken health care system.
- Created a Discharge Planning "Road Show" to explain the rights patients have to a safe discharge, resources available, and ways we can improve transitions from hospitals to home. The Road Show has been presented to over 50 groups, with more than 3000 people participating.
- Made over 50 presentations on the NO on Prop 98, Yes on Prop 99 ballot measures to successfully save Rent Control and win eminent domain protections for homeowners. Participated in dozens of press events, hearings and rallies.
- Helped organize the largest single payer demonstration in San Francisco at the American Health Plans convention – with over 3000 people in attendance.
- Made over 50 presentations on the State budget crisis and Gov. Schwarzenegger's special election ballot measures – and distributed over 100,000 cards to seniors around the State listing our position, along with participating in dozens of press events, hearings, etc.
- Created the Senior to Senior program, where more than 75 seniors called senior voters to inform them of the important issues facing us in key elections.
- Participated in CA Board of Pharmacy hearings to impact the new regulations for Patient Centered Labels – in an effort to make sure that larger font size, translations, and clear instructions for use become part of our standardized drug labels.
- Brought hundreds of seniors to Sacramento to testify, rally and support single payer legislation over the years – as well as participated in educational events around the State.

#### **Mobilizing on CARA Priority Issues**

- Convened a coalition of labor and consumer organizations to address the high cost of prescription drugs, called the OURx Bill of Rights Coalition, which developed a package of bills to improve affordability, access and regulation of the pharmaceutical industry – with several bills signed into law.



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- Helped to create the Campaign for a Healthy California –to win Improved Medicare for All in California. At least 25 volunteers work 8 hours a month on this issue.
- Recruited volunteers and participation for the Medicare for All Bus Tour throughout California.
- Participating in the California Collaborative for Long Term Services and Supports—a stakeholder coalition developing a vision and blueprint for long term care in California.
- Released a study called “What A Difference a Day Makes” to show how California could save over \$27 million dollars a day through avoiding unnecessary hospital readmissions through better discharge planning practices and more community based care. Received national media attention on this report.
- Major participant in “Caring Across Generations” campaign in California by developing new relationships and strategies with immigrant rights groups, homecare worker unions, religious and church-affiliated groups, care recipient and consumer groups.
- Co-sponsored Northern and Southern California CARE Congresses with over 600 people engaging in a conversation about aging in place with dignity, issues of giving and receiving care, and ideas for continued advocacy on these issues.

## Legislative Advocacy

- Created a CARA Legislative Committee to discuss CARA’s position on issues and develop our legislative, education and organizing strategies. This committee has grown to include over 30 members.
- The CARA Legislative Committee has written letters on more than 1000 bills and sent these to all Legislators on the key committees and to the full Legislature before floor votes.
- Developed a CARA “toolkit” on our priority bills (legislation that promotes the priority issues our members vote on at our conventions), with fact sheets, sample letters, etc. that are used by all CARA CATs and others to advocate on behalf of seniors.
- CARA Legislative Committee members attended

hundreds of hearings on our priority bills, presenting CARA’s positions, explaining the impact the legislation would have on seniors.

- CARA CATs and members have met with members of the State Legislature on our key bills as well as the CA Congressional delegation and the Legislature in their district offices and in Sacramento on Social Security, Medicare/Medicaid, health care reform, the State budget, housing, long term care, and other key senior issues.
- Sponsored the first ever workshop for seniors and homeowners on the topic of Homeowner Associations – in an effort to help build a Statewide network.
- Produced and distributed voter slate cards with CARA positions on ballot measures for every election.
- Distributed over 250,000 slate cards on Yes on Prop 30 and No on Prop 31, 32, and 33 for the November 2012 election.
- Created a Candidate Scorecard (after each 2 year session) to identify which State Legislators supported CARA’s key legislative priorities and which did not. Distribute these as part of our education efforts November elections.
- Sponsored 2 Statewide, district wide senior lobby day, visiting over 110 State Legislators (or their staff) on the same day, on the same issues, with constituents, in their district offices.

## Membership Development

- Since our founding Convention in November 2003, have recruited over 250 organizations to join CARA, from both community based senior organizations and labor unions bringing CARA’s combined membership to approximately 950,000 seniors and their families.
- Created the CARA Action Team (CAT) program in 15 locations throughout the State and increased participation in each over the years. The CATs meet regularly and sponsor local advocacy activities on CARA’s issues, and provide a vehicle for organizations and individuals to engage on CARA’s issues.





- Over the last 10 years, CARA staff and leaders have attended over 400 meetings of CARA affiliated organizations to present CARA's work, our position on issues, and support the efforts of our member organizations.
- Created the "Retiree Toolkit – A Guide to Building Stronger Retiree Organizations" which was distributed to every member of the California Labor Federation to help their locals build better, stronger retiree clubs.

### **Leadership Development**

- Installed a Board of Directors representing both labor and community organizations, which are elected every four years and guide the work of the organization.
- Developed a CARA Captain Program (which was the foundation for our CARA Action Teams) to identify constituents to act as ambassadors with State Assemblymembers and Senators, and US Congressmembers.
- Created the CARA Leadership Academy (with the CARA Education Fund) to provide skills training to our affiliates and members so that they can be more effective advocates and activists on key senior issues. To date, over 500 students have participated in this training, and we are now sponsoring these trainings with other community based groups as well.
- Have created a folder on the CARA Website for all of our training materials, and have translated these materials into Spanish.
- Hold annual leadership retreats for the CARA Board members and CAT Conveners to plan our work for the year.
- Sponsor annual one day issue trainings for CARA leaders in Northern and Southern CA, to discuss our organizing plan for the year and the issues that we will be engaged in.
- Provided Technical Assistance to 4 senior service agencies around the State as part of The SCAN Foundation's AGENTS for Change Programs, to encourage senior agencies to develop local leadership and engage them in advocacy activities.

### **Organizational Development**

- Raised between \$250,000 and \$400,000 each year (CARA & CARA Ed Fund combined).
- Have a stellar 3 person staff that provide organizing and training assistance to our members and our CATs and act as liaisons with other organizations.
- Continue to build our Individual Donor program for CARA to encourage board members and other CARA supporters to make an annual pledge to CARA.
- Created the "Wrinkle Run" to raise money for CARA by collecting pledges for distances ran, rocked, or rolled.
- Sponsor an annual drawing to raise funds for CARA – with a goal of raising \$10,000 annually.
- Created the CARA Cariño Award to honor key individuals and organizations that have gone the extra mile to support CARA and our issues, and to help raise money for the organization.
- Recruited 10 statewide labor unions to become contributing or sustaining members of CARA, making an annual contribution that helps to sustain our work.
- Continue to support the development of our sister organization, the CARA Education Fund, which is CARA's 501(C) 3 education, training and policy organization.
- Produce the CARA Alert monthly newsletter, which is e-mailed and faxed to more than 8000 CARA affiliates and activists every month. A printed CARA Alert is produced twice a year and mailed to our entire mailing list and distributed to senior centers and other senior organizations. The CARA Alert is also posted on our website.
- Continue to improve and enhance the CARA website ([www.californiaalliance.org](http://www.californiaalliance.org)) to give seniors and other advocates a place to learn about the work of CARA and get involved.
- Encouraged the California Labor Federation to pass resolutions at their biennial conventions making the support of CARA one of their top priorities.
- Voted to sponsor our annual Convention every other odd numbered year and host 3 Regional Conventions during the even numbered years, starting in 2012.