

# Congressman Paul Tsongas can tell you what he's done.



## THE RECORD

- \* VOTING RECORD. Paul has received an average rating of 93% for his Congressional career from the National Council of Senior Citizens for his support of issues of concern to senior citizens.
- \* NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE--THE KENNEDY PLAN. Paul cosponsored the Kennedy-Corman plan for national health care insurance every year since he was elected to Congress in 1974. He believes quality health care is every American's right and that the Kennedy bill is the most far reaching piece of legislation to address the problem of inadequate health care coverage. His opponent opposes this program because he says it is too costly. Paul thinks we can't afford to be without it.
- \* HOUSING FOR SENIORS. Paul has played a key role in obtaining federal funds for elderly housing, including the \$3.9 million Continental Wingate project in Lowell, the \$5.2 million Arlington Park elderly housing facility and the \$5.7 million Essex Towers project in Lawrence. In reference to the Essex Towers project, the Lawrence Eagle Tribune stated that Tsongas "was instrumental in convincing HUD of the need for the project."
- \* EXPANDED HOME CARE SERVICES. Paul knows the dehumanizing effects of institutionalization--separating the elderly from their family, friends, and community. That is why he has fought to provide health services in the home. Expanded home health care will provide older Americans more control over their own lives and reduce unnecessary institutional costs.
- \* OPPOSED DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE ELDERLY. Paul cosponsored legislation which raised the mandatory retirement age. He will continue to fight for the right of every American to work and fully participate in the community.
- \* AID TO VICTIMS OF CRIME. Concerned by the rise in violent crime against the elderly, Paul cosponsored the Victims of Crime Act providing for federal funds to compensate victims of violent crimes.
- \* ESTABLISHED TAXI DISCOUNT PROGRAM. Mobility and transportation costs are of special concern to older Americans. Paul addressed these problems as Lowell City Councillor. He set up a program that reduced taxi fares for seniors.
- \* CREATED MOBILE CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE. As Congressman, Paul put an office in a mobile van to reach out to more people in his district. The van makes special stops at elderly housing developments.
- \* ESTABLISHED SENIOR CITIZEN INTERN PROGRAM. Paul directly involves elderly volunteers in the operation of his Congressional office. Volunteers monitor legislation of particular interest to older citizens, work with government and private agencies providing services to the elderly, and handle constituent services.

## PROPOSALS

- \* KENNEDY NATIONAL HEALTH PLAN. The principle problem with health care today is that quality care is beyond the reach of too many Americans. Paul will continue to fight along side Ted Kennedy for a program of comprehensive health care coverage because he believes no American should be denied access to good health because of the inability to pay.

- \* EXPANDED MEDICARE--MEDICAID COVERAGE. Until national health care is realized, Paul will work to expand Medicare coverage to include eyeglasses, hearing aids, and dental care--items of special concern to the elderly. Paul also supports increased emphasis on preventive medicine and home health programs under the Medicaid program.
- \* JOB TRAINING FOR THE ELDERLY. Through working with elderly volunteers in his Congressional office Paul knows that older Americans can be a creative, reliable, and competent component of the work force. To tap this underutilized resource Paul proposes expansion of CETA to provide job training for the elderly for part-time and full-time work.
- \* AMENDING SOCIAL SECURITY. To put more dollars in the hands of older Americans, Paul cosponsored legislation to remove the limitation on outside income under the Social Security Act. He also has called for an end to the reduction of Social Security benefits to those who are forced to retire early because of illness.
- \* CREATION OF A HOME HEALTH CLEARING HOUSE AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR ELDERLY AFFAIRS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF H.E.W. Paul wants senior citizens to know about available federal health programs. He cosponsored a bill to establish within the Department of H.E.W. a Home Health Clearing House to provide elderly persons with a single place where they can obtain complete information on the federal health programs available to them. It would also create within the Department an Assistant Secretary for Elderly Health with responsibility for all health and health related matters affecting the elderly.
- \* MULTIPURPOSE SENIOR CITIZEN CENTORS. Because he wants the elderly to remain active, involved, and contributing members of the community, Paul cosponsored an amendment to the Older Americans Act of 1965 to authorize funds for the establishment and operation of multipurpose senior citizen centors.

If elected U.S. Senator, I will continue to fight for legislation to improve the quality of life for senior citizens, or those over middle age. This commitment includes quality health care, affordable, decent and safe housing, sufficient income to maintain a decent standard of living, and the opportunity to work and remain active, involved and contributing members of the community.

My number one priority for older Americans is passage of the Kennedy National Health Plan. Unlike my opponent, I support this program for comprehensive health insurance. Elderly suffer under the present system of inadequate health coverage. The specter of catastrophic illness hangs over the heads of millions of older Americans who might be thrown into poverty by major illness. I will work closely with the senior Senator from Massachusetts, Edward M. Kennedy, to insure that no American is denied access to quality health care because of inability to pay.

The current Medicare-Medicaid program is woefully inadequate, covering only 40% of an elderly American's annual medical expense. With the spiraling costs of health care, older Americans living on fixed incomes, are in a position of special need. Until we pass the comprehensive Kennedy health plan, I will fight to expand the current Medicare program and to require that preventive medicine and home health programs be required under the Medicaid program. I will also work to expand Medicare coverage to include eyeglasses, hearing aids, and dental care--items of special concern to the elderly.

I believe our National health care plan should be responsive to the needs of individual patients. Under the present system, Federal programs encourage institutionalization of elderly patients and offer few alternatives. I believe older Americans should have the opportunity to spend their retirement years with their family and friends in the comforts of their own home. To help make this a reality I cosponsored several pieces of legislation to provide increased home health care services. If elected Senator, I will continue to fight for increased home health care.

I consider the crisis of elderly housing and neighborhood deterioration a major legislative priority. I was among the first public officials here in Massachusetts in announcing my support for the property tax classification amendment. The classification amendment would halt 100% valuation permitting many cities and towns to assess property at different rates depending on its use. There are three reasons why elderly citizens are particularly affected by 100% valuation. First, they are concentrated in the older, larger cities where 100% valuation will have the most dramatic impact on property taxes, second, the increase in assessment will reduce the value of the elderly abatement which 175,000 elderly homeowners now enjoy, and thirdly, senior citizens rely on fixed incomes to pay their increasing homeowner expenses. While the classification amendment is not the total solution to the problems which many older Americans face in keeping their homes and affording decent housing, it will relieve the property tax burden of elderly citizens in Massachusetts.

During my term in Congress I worked to obtain federal funds for elderly housing in the Fifth District. By working closely with the Department of Housing and Urban Development over one thousand elderly housing units have been funded during my term in Congress. Projects like the Essex Towers in downtown Lawrence, not only provide senior citizens with affordable, decent and safe housing, but also bring life back into the city. I cosponsored the Housing Community Development Act which provides for increased rural housing grants and \$80 million over the next three years for the development of congregate facilities for the elderly in public housing. Such facilities enable senior citizens to enjoy the companionship of other seniors while maintaining their own lifestyle.

In spite of the fact that retirement benefits have improved during the past ten years, there is still a totally unacceptable amount of poverty among older Americans. Fifteen percent of our elders have incomes below federal poverty levels--that's \$52 a week for an aged individual and \$66 for a couple. During my term in Congress I have tried to address this problem by cosponsoring legislation to remove the limitation on outside income under the Social Security Act. I also proposed ending the reduction of social security benefits to those who are forced to retire early because of illness.

Job discrimination against older Americans denies all Americans the use of an important national resource. Providing senior citizens the opportunity to work enriches the lives of the elderly and those in their community. To eliminate the barrier for continued growth and self-reliance for the elderly, I cosponsored a bill to raise the mandatory retirement age. I also fought for expansion of CETA to provide job training for the elderly on both part-time and full-time basis. I am opposed to every form of discrimination. Every American has the right to work and fully participate in life.

I have fought to assure that all Americans can look forward to their future--to their retirement with the confidence that those years will offer not only a comfortable lifestyle but also new challenges and opportunities for growth and exploration.

With your help, as Senator, I will continue to fight for adequate housing, quality health care, job opportunities, tax relief and an improved quality of life for older Americans. These are your rights!