

# Your Life, Your Legacy

Volume I Issue 2

March 2008

## Important Economic Stimulus Information for Seniors and Care-Givers

- Don't Miss Out on a Rebate Check
- Not Sure You're Eligible? Most Are!
- Scam Artists Targeting Seniors

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## Seniors **MUST** File Tax Return to Receive a Rebate Check

It is estimated by the [Alliance for Retired Americans](#) and the [AARP](#) that nearly 20 million Americans who depend on Social Security benefits **WILL** qualify for an economic stimulus rebate check from the federal government.

The problem is many whose sole income is from Social Security or disability payments may not get a check **because they don't know** they need to file that all-important return.

Seniors, disabled veterans, and veteran's widows are **most** at risk at losing out on these funds. Here are a few general rules regarding the qualifications:

1. In most cases people need more than \$3,000

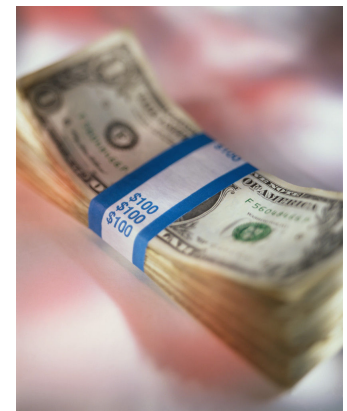
in 2007 income to qualify for a stimulus rebate.

2. Even seniors who do not earn income through current employment can qualify if their Social Security benefits, VA benefits, and railroad retirement benefits equal at least \$3,000 annually.

Questions? For help from the IRS go to [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) or call 1-800-829-1040. The [Volunteer Income Tax Assistance \(VITA\)](#) program provides help to low and moderate income taxpayers. VITA can be reached at 1-800-906-9887. AARP has an [outstanding resource guide](#) online as well.



**Many seniors CAN benefit from the economic stimulus law—they just need to KNOW how!**



## Scams Surrounding Economic Stimulus Rebates—Beware!

**There** have been numerous reports of scams related to the economic stimulus rebate checks that are to be sent by the IRS in May and June. Though they have targeted many taxpayers, those that prey on seniors are some of the most despicable.

The IRS stresses that **NO ONE** from the government will call

any household regarding the stimulus rebate checks. [A recent IRS press release details two types of phone call scams:](#) 1) the caller says that the taxpayer is eligible for a large rebate if taxes are filed early and then asks for checking account information so that a "direct deposit" can be made; 2) the caller claims to be an IRS em-

ployee and tells the person that a check was recently sent but not cashed. The caller then asks for bank account information for "verification".

The IRS will mail reminders to 130 million people in March and April. No phone calls will be made. Please regard any phone call as 'phony'.



One of our clients wants to help someone you know.

## GENEROUS Client Would Like to Help

*Have you ever noticed* just how good people are? We go through each and every day sometimes forgetting just how generous others can be. Case in point—**one of our clients would like to help someone you know.**

Available at no cost is a fully-functional hospital bed in good working order. Our client would like to choose the recipient of the bed.

If you, or someone you know, would like to be considered,

please note the following instructions:

1. Send a message to the Coulson Law Group via postal mail, email, or fax **by 5 p.m. Monday, March 24.**
2. Be sure to include the reason(s) you believe that our client should consider you (or someone you nominate) to receive the bed.
3. Once received all information will be given to the client and the decision will

be theirs to make.

If you would like to reply, here is our contact information in detail:

**FAX: 314.567.9294 or 618.659.9207**

**MAIL: 1001 Craig Rd., Ste. 224, St. Louis, MO 63146 101 Southpointe Dr., Ste.B, Edwardsville, IL 62025**

**EMAIL: [steve@coulsonlawgroup.com](mailto:steve@coulsonlawgroup.com)**



**Ebenezer MO**

## **Mighty MO is Mighty Low!**

**N**ot only does Missouri have the most elder-unfriendly set of asset and income allowances and the most punitive transfer penalty divisor of any state, it also chooses to apply an over-inclusive definition of “transfers subject to penalty” which seems, frankly, mean-spirited and punitive.

As interpreted by the Family Support Division (at least in the area in which we practice), any and every gift and contribution a Medicaid applicant has made during the “penalty period” (three years now and expanding to five years by February 8, 2011) will cause ineligibility for Medicaid nursing home benefits. The period of ineligibility is determined by adding together the amounts of all such transfers

and dividing by the “penalty divisor,” currently \$2,943. The product is the number of months and days that person will have to somehow continue paying for nursing home care, even though he or she has less than \$1,000 left.

Let’s say that a grandmother with five children and ten grandchildren gave them each \$50 per year for their birthdays, and another \$100 each as a holiday gift. She contributed \$25 per week to her place of worship, and made annual contributions of \$250 each to the Alzheimer’s Association and the American Cancer Society.

Unless she chooses to lie on her application, the \$12,150 in “transfers” she made during the three years prior to application will

cause her to be ineligible for 4 months and 4 days when she has exhausted her life savings and applies for Medicaid nursing home benefits.

Other states (including Illinois) take the reasonable approach that these small gifts and contributions, routinely made by “nice people,” old and young, do not amount to the sort of “artificial impoverishment” that the transfer penalties are intended to discourage.

But “Ebenezer MO” doesn’t see it that way. If you are a Missouri senior who chooses to be kind and generous, you’re engaging in the sort of behavior that, if you have the misfortune of ending up broke and in a nursing home, must be punished.

## *Take Care of Yourself While Caring for Others*

**Caring** for a person with Alzheimer’s disease (AD) at home is a difficult task and can become overwhelming at times. Each day brings new challenges as the caregiver copes with changing levels of ability and new patterns of behavior. Research has shown that caregiv-

ers themselves often are at increased risk for depression and illness, especially if they do not receive adequate support from family, friends, and the community.

The [National Institute on Aging](#), on its website, has a wealth of information includ-

ing the [Caregiver Guide](#) that can be downloaded for free. You can also call 800-438-4380 to request a free copy of the [Caregiver Guide](#).

(Information for this article provided by the National Institute on Aging)

## S.A.V.E. Will Get Our Newsletters Done Right!

Over the past few months the number of subscribers to our paper and electronic newsletters has grown to the point that we realized we needed HELP! After considering a number of options, we finally settled on what we believe is a **perfect partnership**.

In case you're scratching your head wondering what S.A.V.E. is, wonder no more...

S.A.V.E. stands for St. Clair Associated Vocational Enterprises. Though it may be new

to you, S.A.V.E. has been in existence since 1972 and is focused on meeting the needs of people with developmental disabilities.

S.A.V.E. began when a small group of parents came together to provide for a better life for their children with developmental challenges such as Downs Syndrome, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and visual and hearing deficits.

Corporations, groups, and others can benefit from the

services that S.A.V.E. offers. "From stuffing envelopes to more complex assembly and packaging procedures to hands-on piece work and machine-operated manufacturing, we're here to meet your needs."

Want to know how you can utilize S.A.V.E.'s services? Contact Amy Wetterlin, Sales Manager, at (618) 234-1992 x 23. You should also check out their website at [www.saveorg.org](http://www.saveorg.org).



We have partnered with **SAVE** to assemble our newsletters.

## Sometimes Old News Can Be Good News

Last month we consolidated our two newsletters—"Medicaid Planning Today" and "Hospice Care and Planning" into the publication you're now reading.

If you would like to view or review any of the previous editions of either newsletters just go to [www.coulsonlawgroup.com](http://www.coulsonlawgroup.com) to have a look. The archives will allow you to search through previous editions.



If you are receiving this newsletter electronically, just click on the links listed below to access our archives:

[Medicaid Planning Today](#)  
[Hospice Care and Planning](#)

Paper copies of back issues are also available by calling 314.567.9292 or 618.659.9292

*"If past history  
was all there  
was to the  
game, the  
richest people  
would be  
librarians."*

**Warren Buffett**

## We Have **RESOURCES** To Help You

Do you want to learn more about better estate planning? Does a loved-one require assistance? Are you just not sure where to turn?

The Coulson Law Group offers many informative and **FREE** brochures, guides to help you learn more. Here are a few of the titles we can offer you:

"Estate Planning: Myths and Facts"

"The Consumer's Guide to Hospice Care"

"The Consumers Guide to Medicaid Planning and Division of Assets"

"Medicaid Eligibility Planning: Myths and Facts"

"The Nine Questions You Must Ask if You or a Loved One is Going Into a Nursing Home"

You can request one or many of these indispensable publications by contacting either of our offices or by emailing Steve Held at:

[steve@coulsonlawgroup.com](mailto:steve@coulsonlawgroup.com).



Need a brochure, resources, or a presentation? Count on us to help!!

Just contact Steve Held at 314-567-9292, 618-659-9292, or [steve@coulsonlawgroup.com](mailto:steve@coulsonlawgroup.com) For more information.

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[www.CoulsonLawGroup.com](http://www.CoulsonLawGroup.com)  
[www.BetterEstatePlanning.com](http://www.BetterEstatePlanning.com)  
[www.QualifyForMedicaid.com](http://www.QualifyForMedicaid.com)

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Your Life, Your Legacy is written by the attorneys of the Coulson Law Group, Wesley J. Coulson and Joseph Ilges, and is published as a service of the Coulson Law Group, 1001 Craig Road, Suite 224, St. Louis, Missouri, 63146; 101 Southpointe Drive, Edwardsville, Illinois, 62025. This is for general purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. For specific questions, you should consult a qualified attorney.



**THE COULSON LAW GROUP**



Advertising Material

*Teleseminars: The "DoorWay" to Learning While You Work*

Each month the attorneys at the Coulson Law Group present teleseminars which address specific topics, case studies, the latest legal updates, or other important aspects of asset protection.

Each of these hour-long teleseminars are an excellent way for you, the listener, to remain up-to date on the most current trends and techniques. Strong on substance AND issues, there might not be an easier way for you to learn more over your lunch hour.

As an added benefit we provide each participant a CD copy of the teleseminar content so that you may replay the information as many times as you wish.



What does it cost to participate? Absolutely nothing! Please contact Steve Held, our Education and Outreach Manager, to find out how you can dial in and learn.

**March Teleseminars**

**"Medicaid Planning in Action: Case Studies. Married Couple Planning"**

**Tuesday, March 25  
12 Noon**

**Monday, March 31  
12 Noon**

Register by calling 314-567-9292, 618-659-9292, or by emailing Steve Held at [steve@coulsonlawgroup.com](mailto:steve@coulsonlawgroup.com).