



Presidential Candidates Should Talk About Aging, Says Gerontologist

April 22, 2016

By Karen Demasters

An age wave is coming that could either make or break America, says Dr. Ken Dychtwald, the CEO of Age Wave, a consulting and educational organization based in Emeryville, Calif., that focuses on issues of aging.

Despite the devastating consequences this aging demographic could have on the entire population of the United States, the subject is being ignored in the presidential race, says Dychtwald, a gerontologist and author of several books on aging.

He says the presidential candidates must be held accountable on the issues the country will face because of the looming increases in the numbers of older Americans.

“The next eight years will be the turning point for future generations,” he says. “It is repugnant that the news media is not asking these questions and the candidates are not addressing them. America has not constructed the right mechanisms to deal with the aging population.”

“As the baby boomers turn 70 at the rate of 10,000 a day, America is becoming a gerontocracy,” he says. “Already, 42 percent of the federal budget is spent on Medicare and Social Security, and according to the Congressional Budget Office, this will exceed 50 percent by 2030.”

The candidates and society must come to terms with the increasing longevity that is today’s reality in order to turn a potential tragedy into a triumph, he said during a webinar Thursday. Presidential candidates have to explain how they intend to use the resources of older Americans to benefit them and society, how they plan to encourage the building of housing for older people and how they will promote saving among all ages.

For instance, in addition to determining how to care for Alzheimer’s victims, America should spend more resources to eliminate the disease.

In addition, candidates must address how to avoid a new era of mass poverty. According to the Government Accounting Office, 52 percent of households headed by someone age 55 or older have no retirement savings and 51 percent have no pensions beyond Social Security.

“We could be heading to a future in which tens of millions of impoverished aging boomers will place crushing burdens on the U.S. economy and on the generations forced to support them,” Dychtwald says.

Age Wave is asking each of the major presidential candidates to address these and other issues raised by the increasing longevity of the population.

Original URL: <http://www.fa-mag.com/news/presidential-candidates-should-talk-about-aging--says-gerontologist-26484.html?section=43>