U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Press Center

Raskin Op-Ed: New Way For Americans To Save

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WASHINGTON – In an op-ed published today in The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Treasury Deputy Secretary Sarah Bloom Raskin writes about Treasury Secretary Jacob J. Lew's travel to Atlanta earlier this month to discuss ways to further grow our economy in a way that works better for everybody and widens the circle of opportunity for more Americans. Deputy Secretary Raskin also highlights how the Treasury Department is making saving for retirement more accessible with myRA.

Read the piece online.

New way for Americans to save
By Sarah Bloom Raskin

In his final State of the Union address, President Obama spoke about ensuring that our growing economy works for all Americans. On the heels of the President's speech, my boss, Treasury Secretary Lew, traveled to Atlanta to discuss how we can make our financial system fairer and widen the circle of opportunity for more Americans.

One essential factor in building a more inclusive prosperity is giving all Americans easy and attractive ways to save for their retirement years, and I have been thrilled to work on the unveiling of *my*RA —"my Retirement Account"—a game changer that will help Americans begin to save for a safe and comfortable retirement.

As a country, we've made significant economic progress over the past seven years. Our national unemployment rate is now at its lowest level since April 2008. Our businesses have added more than 14 million jobs over 70 consecutive months – the longest streak on record. And in Georgia, the unemployment rate has fallen to 5.6%, 472,000 jobs have been created since February 2010, and the housing market continues to rebound.

But we all know too many Americans — particularly low and moderate-income and minority families — remain stuck on the margins of our improved economy and the financial system. The lack access to basic accounts or access to safe and affordable financial services. In fact, nearly one in three working Americans has no retirement savings or pension at all. Part of the reason is that millions of people, including many Georgians, lack access to an employer-sponsored retirement program.

That's why the U.S. Treasury Department recently launched *my*RA.

This is a new, simple, safe and affordable way for people to start building toward a secure retirement. *my*RA removes many of the common barriers to saving, including fees and minimum requirements. This innovation is particularly useful for those who don't have access to an employer-sponsored retirement account like a 401(k). Most importantly, *my*RA helps people get in the habit of saving. Even a few dollars a week can turn into thousands of dollars in savings over time.

If you haven't started saving for retirement yet, you're not alone. A 2014 Federal Reserve report found that 42 percent of workers don't have access to an employer-sponsored retirement plan. These Americans don't get the benefit of matching contributions from their employers or the ease of regular payroll deductions to help them hatch a retirement nest egg.

But we know that once people start saving, it is a healthy habit that sticks. The challenge is getting started. For too many Americans, the high start-up fees, the fear of losing money, and seemingly massive minimum balance and deposit requirements are common barriers to saving.

That's where *my*RA comes in. With no fees and no minimum requirements, *my*RA offers a safe and easy way for working Americans to save for the long-run. And it's easy to get started —just go to www.myRA.gov. Using *my*RA's automatic contributions from your bank account or paycheck, you can get into the savings habit and watch your savings grow throughout the year.

As the President emphasized, our country is strongest when all of our citizens have the chance to share in our growing economy. Tools like *my*RA provide a concrete way for more Americans to begin saving for retirement. With a new year ahead, now is the time to start down a path to more secure economic future.

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