

FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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Number of Uninsured Americans over 55 Drops to Lowest Point Ever

New data released by the Census Bureau this week showed that 8.8 million fewer people are uninsured compared to last year. The percentage of people over 55 who are uninsured has dropped to less than 10%, its lowest point in history. The data, which comes from the Census's annual Current Population Survey, is the first to be released since full implementation of the Affordable Care Act. As a result of President **Obama's** signature healthcare law, millions of Americans have been able to sign up for private health insurance and dozens of states have expanded Medicaid for their residents.

"These results show that the Affordable Care Act is working for millions of people," said Alliance President **Barbara Easterling**. "The Alliance will continue to support efforts to expand Medicaid in the states that have not accepted the federal funds that are available to them."

Tell Congress to Stop Garnishing Social Security to Pay Student Debts

Currently, over 160,000 Social Security beneficiaries are having their monthly benefits garnished to pay outstanding student debts. This comes at a time when student debt has quadrupled since 2003 and America is facing a \$7.7 trillion retiree savings gap. The garnishment of Social Security benefits to pay debts used to be illegal. However, in 1996, Congress passed a law that stripped those protections from people who owed debts to the Federal government – and 86% of student debts are government-owned.

Thankfully, the Administration can stop the garnishing of Social Security checks and an Act of Congress isn't needed to do it. [Join us](#) in telling President Obama and Education Secretary **Arne Duncan** to declare a moratorium on garnishing earned benefits.

"It is absolutely ridiculous that the government is dipping its hands into the benefits of so many people," said Alliance Secretary-Treasurer **Ruben Burks**. "By expanding earned Social Security benefits rather than garnishing them, we will make sure that the program remains strong for retirees and recent college graduates alike."

Ben Carson Says Seniors Need to "Voluntarily Opt-out" of Social Security

This week, Republican Presidential Candidate **Ben Carson** suggested that some senior citizens should "opt-out" of Social Security as a way to keep the program solvent. "I would love for people to voluntarily opt-out of it," he said in an [interview](#) with CNN.

"Dr. Carson offers some pretty bad advice on Social Security financing," said Alliance Executive Director **Richard Fiesta**. "We all know that making everyone pay their fair share is

the best solution for keeping the Social Security system strong. Shrinking it is the exact opposite of the expansion we need.”

Ohio Alliance Joins Forces with Progressive Nuns Ahead of Papal Visit

The [Cincinnati Enquirer](#) published an op-ed by Ohio Alliance Educational Fund President **Norm Wernet** and Sister **Simone Campbell** of Nuns on the Bus, a group of Catholic nuns committed to advancing social progress. The nuns’ bus will stop in Cincinnati as part of their cross-country trip to Washington. The sisters hope to arrive in the capital in time for the Pope’s visit next week. In keeping with the spirit of this year’s theme, “Bridge Divides; Transform Politics”, the nuns plan to meet with ordinary people of all faiths to discuss policies that foster economic justice. Among their priorities: reverse Federal budget cuts that have done damage to vulnerable communities and push for policies that keep people from being pushed into poverty.

Also in Ohio, 150 Alliance members gathered in Columbus on September 8th to discuss federal and state retiree issues. **Samantha Trueblood**, Campaign Coordinator for the AFL-CIO, gave remarks, as did Mr. Wernet. **Misha Barnes** from LEAD Ohio spoke about her organization’s program of identifying, recruiting, and training progressive candidates at all levels of government.