

FRIDAY ALERT



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Former Labor Secretary Robert Reich Spells out the Need to Expand Social Security

Former Labor Secretary **Robert Reich** released a new video explaining the need for expanding earned Social Security benefits by eliminating the \$118,500 cap on income subject to Social Security Taxes. Reich notes that with employer-sponsored defined benefit pensions disappearing, and two-thirds of seniors relying on Social Security for a majority of their income, it is more important than ever to expand earned benefits. Currently, billionaires pay the same amount of money into Social Security each year as those earning \$118,500.

The video is one in a 10-part series produced by MoveOn.org in collaboration with Reich on how to save the economy.

“More and more experts, from economists to former Labor Secretaries, have called for Social Security expansion,” said **Barbara J. Easterling**, President of the Alliance. “Please [watch the video now and share it](#) with your family and friends.”

Senate Starts Debate on Trade Promotion Authority Bill (Fast Track)

The U.S. Senate voted on Thursday to start debate on a trade promotion authority bill that President **Barack Obama** needs to complete the massive Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal. Every Republican voted to advance fast-track except **Bill Cassidy** (LA) and **Dan Sullivan** (AK), who both did not vote, while Democrats were split. For a tally of the 65-33 vote, go to <http://ow.ly/MY4zt>.

Sixty votes are needed to overcome a filibuster and open debate. The trade bill will face amendment votes in the Senate next week. The House is expected to take up the bill after Memorial Day.

The vote came after Senate Democrats filibustered the bill on Tuesday, [“spurring a furious salvage operation from the president and Senate leaders.”](#) according to *Roll Call*. Earlier in the week, the Alliance had sent [a letter to every U.S. House member](#) and [Senator](#) opposing the bill. The letters noted that TPP could cause seniors to pay more for their prescription drugs.

“There is also other pending legislation that would take \$700 million from Medicare to pay for Trade Adjustment Assistance,” said **Ruben Burks**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “This means that Medicare could be cut in order to pay for the adverse conditions workers face as a result of TPP. We cannot allow Medicare to be used as a piggy bank every time the government needs funding for other purposes.”

New York State Alliance holds Convention, Elects New Officers

Richard Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance, traveled to Latham, New York to speak at the New York State Alliance for Retired Americans Bi-Annual convention on Wednesday. **Terrence Melvin**, New York AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer and National President of the Coalition of Black

Trade Unionists, and **Michael Burgess**, former director, NY State Office for the Aging, also spoke. Elected to office were: **Barry Kaufmann**, President; **Doris Welch**, Secretary; **Dorothy Breen**, Treasurer; **Paul Schuh**, Labor Vice President; and **Molly Krakowski**, Community Vice President.

“I would like to thank **Dennis Tracey**, our outgoing state president, for all that he contributed to the New York State Alliance and his accomplishments in bringing so many seniors a more secure retirement,” said Fiesta. “Dennis has been a pleasure to have on our side and an asset to our cause. All of his friends at the Alliance wish him a very happy retirement.”

Medicare Turns 50: Still Here despite the Efforts of Rick Santorum

“You want the private sector out there competing, driving down costs, improving efficiency. You want to get rid of this — of CMS [the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services], where government basically micromanages all healthcare through Medicare and Medicaid.” – Former Sen. **Rick Santorum** (R-PA), January 4, 2012

The Alliance for Retired Americans is a national organization that advocates for the rights and well-being of over 4.3 million retirees and their families.