

FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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Negotiators Reach a Deal on TPP – Alliance Members Focus on Stopping it

After five years of secret negotiations, representatives from 12 countries came to an [agreement](#) on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) on Monday. If implemented, the deal would allow drug companies to lock in patent protections on critical medications for seniors, making it more difficult to get generics on the market. It could also open drug subsidy programs under Medicare and Medicaid to challenges in secret international tribunals. The Alliance has already begun focusing on plans to stop the TPP, including passing resolutions at the local level; preparing activists for the fight ahead; and educating members on the issue.

“The Alliance opposes the TPP because it favors pharmaceutical companies over American seniors and retirees,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “For example, it could jeopardize the government’s ability to list and price prescription drugs in public programs, such as Medicaid, that are essential to millions of seniors and disabled people.”

Hillary Clinton Joins Sanders and O’Malley in Opposing TPP

In an interview with PBS Newshour on Wednesday, former Secretary of State and U.S. Senator **Hillary Clinton** said she is not in favor of the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

“As of today, I am not in favor of what I have learned about it,” Clinton said, later adding, “I don’t believe it’s going to meet the high bar I have set.”

Clinton is the third Presidential candidate competing for the Democratic nomination to come out against the trade deal, joining Senator **Bernie Sanders** and former Governor **Martin O’Malley**. This summer, Congress approved fast track legislation that allowed the deal to be subject to an up-or-down vote without any amendments and with limited debate. Former U.S. Senator **Jim Webb** was against fast track authority. A final vote on TPP is expected early next year.

House, Senate Democrats Propose Fixes to Medicare Part B Premium Increase

On Wednesday, House and Senate Democrats introduced bills (H.R. 3696 and S. 2148) that would protect Medicare Part B beneficiaries from [a 52% increase](#) in their premiums next year. About 30% of the 51 million Americans who benefit from Medicare Part B would otherwise be affected by the massive change, which would raise premiums from \$104.90 monthly to \$159.30 if Congress does nothing. Deductibles for all Medicare recipients would increase from \$147 to \$223.



At a [press conference](#) on Wednesday in front of the Capitol building, **Ron Thompson**, President of the Virginia Alliance for Retired Americans, delivered remarks strongly urging that Congress address the issue promptly. “I am trying to change my financial plans based on this increase to my Medicare premium, but it won’t be easy,” Mr. Thompson said. “Right now, I don’t know what I am going to do to make up the difference.” House Democratic Leader **Nancy Pelosi** (D-CA), Reps **Xavier Becerra** (D-CA), **Joe Crowley** (D-NY), **Jan Schakowsky** (D-IL), **Sander Levin** (D-MI) and **Doris Matsui** (D-CA) spoke in support of the House bill.

Alliance Executive Director **Richard Fiesta** was also present to show support. “The higher costs for Medicare beneficiaries would come as health care costs are rising, and just as the federal government is saying that seniors don’t need a Social Security cost-of-living adjustment next year,” said Mr. Fiesta.

If you have not done so already, [please sign our petition demanding that Congress act to prevent skyrocketing Medicare premiums and deductibles.](#)

Minnesota Alliance Stands up to Drug Company Giveaway

On Monday, members of the Minnesota Alliance for Retired Americans and allies held a rally and press event to raise awareness about the pharmaceutical industry’s effort to secure a special exemption from the Inter Partes Review (IPR) process. A spokesperson from Representative **Keith Ellison**’s (D-MN) office delivered remarks.

IPR was put in place to prevent companies from taking advantage of illegitimate patents and to promote fair competition within the marketplace. By claiming an exemption from this

process, drug companies would be able to extend their existing patents by making small changes to the drug's formula or method of administration, rather than improving the drug's overall effectiveness. This would prevent affordable generic versions of drugs from becoming available to consumers, driving up prices for everyone and costing taxpayers billions.

"Americans already pay the highest prescription drug prices in the world," said Alliance Secretary-Treasurer **Joseph Peters, Jr.** "Congress should stand up for American seniors and oppose special treatment for drug companies in the IPR process."

The Alliance for Retired Americans is a national organization that advocates for the rights and well-being of over 4.4 million retirees and their families.