

# FRIDAY ALERT



## Alliance for Retired Americans

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## Democratic Debate Includes Prescription Drug Focus



The Democratic Presidential debate on Saturday night included questions about addressing the high cost of prescription drugs in the United States. **Hillary Clinton** said that she supports capping out-of-pocket prescription drug costs at \$250 per month and that she wants Medicare to be able to negotiate lower prices for seniors. Americans pay the highest prescription drug prices in the industrialized world, and last year drug prices went up by 13 percent.

Sen. **Bernie Sanders** stated at the debate that he went over the Canadian border to show how much more affordable some cancer drugs are in other countries, compared to the U.S. Sanders also supports allowing Medicare to negotiate better prices on behalf of seniors.

"I did not hear similar talk about prescription drug costs being too high at any of the Republican debates," said Alliance President **Robert Roach, Jr.** "It doesn't seem to be an issue that is high on the GOP agenda."

## Six Days a Week Postal Delivery - It's Possible with Postal Banking

From 1911 until 1967, the United States Postal Service provided safe and convenient banking services for working-class Americans. Reinstating postal banking now would allow the postal

service to maintain local branches in many rural areas as well as a six-day home delivery service that would be vital for many seniors' to receive their medication.

[With your help we can urge Postmaster General Brennan to reinstitute postal banking.](#)

Unfortunately, nearly 28% of American households are being underserved by traditional banking institutions, spending almost 10% of their income on fees and services at payday lenders, check cashing services, and various other predatory financial services. This is a \$103 billion dollar industry making its profits by preying on the working and retired class.



“Postal banking will strengthen the United States Postal service so that it can provide services like six day medicine delivery to retirees who desperately need it,” said Alliance Secretary-Treasurer **Joseph Peters, Jr.** “This issue is important for all seniors – particularly those who live in rural areas.”

### **Alliance Signs Legal Brief in Support of Public Sector Collective Bargaining Rights**

The Alliance signed onto a friend of the court brief filed on November 13 by the National Women’s Law Center and the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights in support of public sector collective bargaining rights. The case is Friedrichs v. CTA (California Teachers Association), in which the U.S. Supreme Court will rule on whether public employers can collect fair share fees from bargaining unit members. It has been the law for several decades that they can. It is expected that the court will hear arguments in January with a decision in the spring or early summer.

The summary of the Alliance argument is on pages 2 to 4 of the [brief](#). The Alliance and the 70 organizations supporting public sector bargaining are listed beginning on page 26.

### **Unions Fight General Electric’s Assault on Retiree Health Care**

GE has announced that effective January 1, 2016, it will be terminating its post-65 retiree medical plans. This is medical coverage that was promised in workers’ contracts and that the retirees worked for decades to earn.

GE has plans to offer retirees the opportunity to purchase coverage through a private broker exchange. Unfortunately, this will leave thousands of retirees (particularly those on life saving drugs) to face much higher drug costs than their current budgets are designed to accommodate. The IUE-CWA is leading a coalition of labor unions, including the United Electrical Workers, United Auto Workers, Machinists, Steelworkers, Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Teamsters

and the Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers, that has filed a lawsuit charging that GE is violating federal labor law and the Employer Retirement Income Security Act.

“It is a sad day when a highly profitable corporation like GE decides to turn its back on their retirees who gave them years of loyalty and dedication at a time when they need them most,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “It’s despicable, really.”

### **New Hampshire Alliance Holds its Convention**

Mr. Fiesta spoke about the Alliance’s work with the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) on Saturday at the New Hampshire Alliance’s Biennial Conference in Hooksett. Elected to office were: **Lucy Edwards**, President; **Jane Lang**, Executive Vice President; **Betty Ann Abbott**, Treasurer; **Lew Henry**, Recording Secretary; and **Ronna Hamelin**, Membership Secretary, as well as at-large officers **Larry Converse**, **Steve Kloppenberg**, **Charlotte DiLorenzo**, **Sara Dustin**, and **Wayne Alterisio**.

The attendees passed resolutions addressing the expansion of earned Social Security and Medicare benefits, climate change, housing, and transportation. Other speakers included **Lauren Luchi**, AFT Retiree Director; **Alex Lawson**, Executive Director of Social Security Works; and expert story teller **Rebecca Rule**.