

# FRIDAY ALERT



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Spanish version: [www.alianzadejubilados.org](http://www.alianzadejubilados.org)

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## **President Trump, House Republicans in a Health Care War with Older Americans**

Republican efforts to ram their plan to replace Obamacare through Congress quickly hit a snag on Monday when the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) released its analysis of the American Health Care Act (AHCA). The [report](#) found that the plan would reduce the lifespan of the [Medicare Trust Fund](#) by three years, from 2028 to 2025; cause 24 million people to lose their insurance; and cut \$880 billion from Medicaid. The GOP plan replaces Obamacare subsidies with flat, age-based tax credits that would not take into account the price differences between states or the income levels of the recipients.

CBO found that older Americans would lose the most if the AHCA were to pass. Many of the people losing insurance would be ages 50-64 and not yet eligible for Medicare. They would be priced out of insurance at a higher rate than the rest of the country -- leading to higher Medicare costs as people would enter Medicare with unaddressed medical needs.

“The big winners would be corporations and millionaires who would enjoy the windfall of enormous tax cuts,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance.

Despite the CBO estimates, the House Budget Committee approved the American Health Care Act on Thursday, moving the controversial measure to the floor next week.

“The bill represents a concerted effort to cut health care for the most vulnerable to fund an enormous tax cut for people who don’t need it,” Alliance Executive Director **Richard Fiesta** said. “Older Americans know how important affordable health care is for their families and will continue to fight against this proposal. The members of the Alliance call on Congress to scrap this bill immediately.”

## **“Save our Health Care” National Call-In Day is Tuesday, March 21**

The Alliance is organizing a national call-in day to protest the GOP’s health care replacement bill. Please follow this [link](#) to pledge that you will call your Representative on Tuesday, March 21 and demand that the U.S. House reject the American Health Care Act.

## **Trump Budget Hurts Seniors with Massive Cuts to Meals on Wheels, Medical Research and Programs to Help Low-Income People Pay their Heating Bills**

President Trump unveiled his \$1.15 trillion FY 2018 budget, a massive overhaul of federal government spending that slashes many domestic programs while significantly increasing military spending and making a down payment on a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Trump's preliminary proposal covers about one-fourth of the approximately \$4 trillion federal budget, the discretionary portion that Congress passes each year. It doesn't address taxes, Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, or make predictions about deficits and the economy. According to [the Associated Press](#), those "big-picture details" are due in mid-May.

The budget proposal includes no funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program which many older Americans need to help pay their home heating costs.

Biomedical research and public health are also big losers in the proposed budget. The budget calls for a "major reorganization" in the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and cuts \$5.8 billion, about 20% of NIH's \$30 billion budget. NIH conducts research for diseases including Alzheimer's, diabetes, and cancer.

Details on funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are sketchy. Many think the administration's inclusion of the words "increase state flexibility and focus on the leading public health challenges to each state" means diverting funds from the CDC's core budget to provide block grants to individual states.

One proposal in the budget calls for the complete elimination of the Community Development Block Grant program, which operates under the Department of Housing and Urban Development and partially funds the successful Meals on Wheels program that delivers prepared food to elderly Americans. A representative for Meals on Wheels said not enough details were provided to discern exactly how this budget would impact the program, but indicated that "it is difficult to imagine a scenario in which they will not be significantly and negatively impacted."

At a press briefing Thursday about the budget President Trump's Office of Management and Budget Director **Mick Mulvaney** defended proposed cuts to Meals on Wheels by saying the program is one of many that is "just not showing any results." [The Washington Post](#) fully refuted that point with data showing significantly improved diet quality, increase nutrient intakes, and reduced food insecurity and nutritional risk among participants.

During the briefing Mulvaney tried to characterize the budget as "[compassionate](#)" because it would protect taxpayers from putting money toward inefficient or ineffective programs, saying, "...we're not going to ask you for your hard-earned money anymore. Single mom of two in Detroit, give us your money. We're not going to do that anymore unless they can guarantee that money will be used in a proper function." That, he says, "is about as compassionate as you can get."

"Eliminating federal funding for Meals on Wheels and home energy assistance is neither compassionate nor fiscally responsible," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "These programs have been proven to keep seniors in their homes, saving on health care and nursing home costs for taxpayers and allowing older Americans to live in dignity."

### **Illinois, Wisconsin Alliance Members Brave a Blizzard to Fight for Health Care**

Showing solidarity with several Wisconsin progressive groups, Illinois and Wisconsin Alliance members [joined](#) hundreds who were protesting the GOP's Affordable Care Act replacement bill outside of **Speaker Paul Ryan's** office in Racine, Wisconsin on Tuesday. The protesters called on Ryan to drop his current health care proposal and demanded expanded Medicare for all.



Activists traveled from Chicago and braved the blizzard to protest the AHCA.

Racine County received almost 22 inches of snow, but that did not deter the calls for justice. The protest came just after the release of the CBO report showing that millions would lose health coverage under the GOP plan and that Medicare would be significantly weakened. Protesters criticized the GOP plan for shifting costs from younger to older populations.

“This rally shows how seriously we take the threats to health coverage and how far we will go to protect our health care,” said President Roach. “We will fight measures to cut and weaken Medicare and Medicaid, rain or shine, and stand up for those who otherwise would not be heard.”

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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.