

FRIDAY ALERT



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Gorsuch Confirmation Affects All Americans, Especially Seniors and Workers

Neil Gorsuch was confirmed as a Supreme Court Justice by the Senate on Friday, more than a year after **Merrick Garland** was nominated by then-President **Obama** to fill the late **Antonin Scalia's** seat. Senator **Jeff Merkley** (D-OR) spoke for over 15 hours against confirming Gorsuch on Tuesday and Wednesday, but the filibuster attempt failed. Democrats' rage over Republicans' refusal to hold hearings on Garland, a more moderate nominee, and Gorsuch's conservative ideology led them to filibuster the nomination.

When Senate Majority Leader **Mitch McConnell's** (R-KY) motion for cloture to end debate failed, Republicans chose to invoke the "nuclear option" on Thursday and end the filibuster. The maneuver put a stop to the long-held requirement that Supreme Court justice nominees get 60 votes in order to be confirmed, further infuriating Democrats and many others. The final [vote](#) on the confirmation was 54-45.

The nomination was watched closely not just because of the extended period during which the Court had been stuck at eight members, but because of the [important cases](#) that it is expected to hear in the coming months. Cases on voter ID requirements, which disproportionately keep older and minority Americans from voting, will be decided in the next few years and Gorsuch has expressed his support for these limitations.

The vote also paves the way for Gorsuch to vote in favor of additional leeway for Republicans in the round of redistricting that will begin after the 2020 election and to further loosen campaign finance limitations.

Gorsuch's past ruling against a truck driver who left his truck to avoid dangerous weather lent credence to concerns that he favors the rights of corporations over the right of workers to be safe at work and protected from discrimination.

"We will continue to advocate for civil rights and fight injustices," said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. "And we will definitely remember this in November of 2018."

Gottlieb Defends PhRMA Ties As He Prepares To Lead FDA

Prescription drugs prices and pharmaceutical corporation practices were in the spotlight as FDA Commissioner nominee **Scott Gottlieb** was grilled by Senators on Wednesday. Senators from both parties questioned his ability to navigate conflicts of interest, and much of the hearing focused on Gottlieb's close [ties](#) to the industry he will be tasked with regulating. He tried to portray his connections to the industry as a benefit, telling Senator **Tammy Baldwin** (D-WI) that he is "uniquely qualified" to address attempts by major pharmaceutical companies to exploit loopholes.

Gottlieb parroted the industry line that FDA regulation is a major factor in driving up drug costs. The hearing concluded with no date set for a vote.

Alliance Secretary-Treasurer **Joseph Peters, Jr.** said that the confirmation hearing is “essential to make sure that the nominee is up to the task and will be an advocate within the agency for changes that help consumers, not pharmaceutical companies. Dr. Gottlieb is not that person.”

President Trumka Outlines Path Forward for Workers

Addressing a packed house at the National Press Club on Tuesday, AFL-CIO president **Richard Trumka** laid out a bold agenda for workers. Beginning with a call to end the wage gap between men and women, Mr. Trumka wove together vignettes of workers across the country with goals of expanding collective bargaining and building an economy that works for everyone. Citing right-to-work and offshoring of jobs as barriers, he called on the **Trump** administration to prove it was on the side of working Americans.



President Trumka at the National Press Club on Tuesday

Trumka said that he is giving the new administration a chance. Directing his comments towards Donald Trump, Trumka declared, “We’re watching. We’re keeping score. If the president does something good for all working people, something consistent with our values, we’ll support it and work hard for it. If he does something that threatens who we are and what we stand for, we are going to fight it, as a unified labor movement.”

Mr. Trumka praised Trump for ending the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which would have raised the costs of prescription drugs. He called on Trump to fulfill his promise to invest in infrastructure and fight to keep jobs in America. Speaking about healthcare, Trumka laced into

Republicans for their proposal to raid the Medicare Trust Fund to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy and called for universal care.

“We look forward to working with our brothers and sisters in the labor movement to improve the lives of all Americans,” said President Roach. “We will work together to make sure the president keeps his promises and does not cut our hard-earned Social Security and Medicare benefits, or decimate Medicaid with his health care changes.”

Pence Meets With Ryan and the House Freedom Caucus on Health Care but Makes Little Progress

House Republicans and White House officials are still scrambling to push through the controversial American Health Care Act, despite its failure to recruit sufficient votes to pass the House. On Monday, Vice President **Mike Pence** met with House Freedom Caucus members to present an [offer](#) to increase support for the bill.

The deal would allow states to apply for waivers to repeal two Affordable Care Act regulations. One requires insurance plans to cover “essential health benefits,” which includes prescription drugs and preventive services. The other regulation prevents insurers from charging sick people higher premiums. Critics have stated that allowing states to repeal these provisions would take away life-saving services for millions and force those with pre-existing conditions to pay outrageous amounts for coverage.

Intended to appeal to Freedom Caucus members, this offer would likely be opposed by many moderate Republicans who are concerned about the millions who could lose coverage. The House Rules Committee amended the health care legislation on Thursday, but the largest obstacles to the bill have not been resolved.

“In attempting to woo over hardline conservatives, the GOP will only succeed in making a universally hated health care bill even worse,” said Alliance Executive Director **Richard Fiesta**. “Cutting off access to care and forcing those who need insurance the most to pay even more is unconscionable. Those in Congress and at the White House who support those ideas are not fulfilling their promise to improve health care.”

Fiduciary Rule Delay to Cost Working Families and Retirees Billions

The Obama-era Fiduciary Rule that requires financial advisors to act in the best interest of their clients when handling your retirement and investment funds has been [delayed by the Trump administration](#) and its ultimate future is still unknown. The rule was to take effect on April 10 but is now delayed until June 9. Conflicts of interest in retirement advice cost America’s families an estimated [\\$17 billion](#) a year. The Economic Policy Institute (EPI) estimates that the proposed 60-day delay of the fiduciary rule would cost workers saving for retirement [\\$3.7 billion](#) over the next 30 years.