

FRIDAY ALERT



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Republican Leaders Push Obamacare Repeal despite Lack of Consensus or Details

Senate Republicans continue to struggle to find the votes to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and pass a replacement health care plan.

As of Friday, Majority Leader **Mitch McConnell** maintains that the members will begin to vote on Tuesday but has not yet said what plans will be voted on.

Among the options are a “repeal only” bill that would create insurance market instability and cause 32 million to lose their insurance coverage. Premiums would increase by 20% to 25% in the first year and by 50% the year following the repeal of the Medicaid expansion. Other members, including Senators **Shelley Moore Capito** (R-WV), **Susan Collins** (R-ME), and **Lisa Murkowski** (R-AK), signaled their intention to vote against a motion to proceed, which would allow debate on the bill.



Members of the Ohio Alliance, including President Norm Wernet, helped deliver more than 21,000 petitions to Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) on Wednesday with allies from Protect Our Care.

In the wake of these developments, calls for bipartisan negotiations have [increased](#). A bipartisan reform of health care would be difficult, as it would require the GOP to abandon their efforts to repeal the ACA, and they have been promising that for the past 7 years.

“Our activism to keep premiums for older Americans from skyrocketing and prevent draconian cuts to Medicaid are working,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “Governors from both parties have consistently shown disapproval for the Senate health care plan, particularly because it guts Medicaid, and that has helped tremendously.”

“But we cannot let up. I urge all our members to call their Senators once a day until these bills are defeated.” Dial 1-866-828-4162 to be connected directly with your Senator’s office.

House Republican Budget Proposal Drastically Slashes Medicare, Medicaid

The House Republican Leadership announced a budget blueprint Tuesday that slashes spending throughout the government in ways that would be particularly hard on older Americans. Rep. **Diane Black** (R-TN), chair of the House Budget Committee, wrote the blueprint that cuts federal spending by \$5 trillion over the next decade. The proposed budget has a long way to go before it can become law, although it did pass its first test by making it out of committee on Wednesday.

The budget is the first step that Republicans will take as part of their effort to overhaul the tax code. According to the Tax Policy Center, 96% of the Republican tax cuts would go to those making more than \$1 million annually.

The budget plan includes \$487 billion in Medicare cuts and it would change the guaranteed health benefits program into a voucher system for future retirees, increasing costs for retirees. Premiums would increase by 25%. The proposed budget would also cut Medicaid by \$1 trillion, forcing states to ration care or reduce services.

“Nearly every retiree who is in a nursing home relies on Medicaid and would be severely harmed by this proposal,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “Retirees worked hard for their entire lives to gain the benefits of Medicare and Medicaid. The cruel cuts outlined in this budget would be unacceptable.”

Under Trump, Republicans Continue Attempts to Restrict Voting Access

According to a recent [report](#) from the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University’s School of Law, at least 99 bills to reduce voting and registration have been proposed in 31 states in 2017, and these bills have already become law in five states.

This state-by-state push comes as President **Trump** continues to claim that millions of illegal votes were cast against him in the 2016 election and the Trump Election Commission swings into high gear.

While President Trump and others say that they are working to root out systemic voter fraud, experts say that the “problem” is virtually nonexistent. In the 2016 election, there were only [four confirmed cases](#) of voting fraud.

The Election Commission recently requested massive amounts of voter data from the states. The request was met with stiff resistance, even from many Republican officials, and prompted multiple lawsuits accusing the panel of invading the privacy of tens of millions of Americans. The suits say that the panel has offered no indication of what it plans to do with the requested data, which includes home addresses, dates of birth and partial Social Security numbers.

Policies such as Voter-I.D. laws often keep thousands of citizens from being able to cast their ballots. Senior citizens are hit especially hard, with the Brennan Center [reporting](#) that 18 percent of seniors don't have photo I.D.s. There are countless [stories](#) of seniors who are left unable to vote because of these laws.

“Voter I.D. laws and other methods of suppression put forward by the GOP are a gross attack on our democracy,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “These tactics seem designed to limit who can go to the ballot box, and are likely to affect seniors disproportionately.”

U.S. Retirement Ranking Drops to 17th Worldwide

In the fifth annual [Global Retirement Index](#) put out by Natixis Global Management, the United States [has fallen](#) three spots to seventeenth among developed countries. The Index gives each country a score based on 18 indicators that include quality of life, finances, and health care. The United States received a score of 73 out of 100, which put them immediately above the United Kingdom and France, but below Belgium and Ireland. Norway, Switzerland, and Iceland top off the list, earning scores of 89, 87, and 84 respectively.

The United States was lowered in this year's Index for a number of reasons, including a low life expectancy, even though the country spends more per capita on health care than any other country on the list. The report also stressed the importance of income equality, with the United States posting the sixth worst score for the factor. According to the report, many lower-income retirees are unable to benefit from the country's economic growth.