

FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

815 16th Street, NW, Fourth Floor • Washington, DC 20006 • 202.637.5399

www.retiredamericans.org • aracommunications@retiredamericans.org

July 7, 2017

Spanish version: www.alianzadejubilados.org

Governors Lead Bipartisan Backlash against Senate Health Care Bill

Last week the Alliance contacted the National Governors Association (NGA) to see what America's governors can do to stop the Senate health care bill from moving forward, since the changes to Medicaid in the bill would drastically affect citizens and state budgets. From coast to coast criticism from governors on both sides of the aisle has been mounting on the Senate's proposed "Better Care Reconciliation Act" (BCRA). Bipartisan condemnation from governors has focused on the health care bill's provisions that slash Medicaid, strip away care, and give tax breaks to the wealthy.

"Make no mistake, people will needlessly die under this plan," [said](#) Connecticut Governor **Dannel Malloy**. "It should come as no surprise that Republicans preferred to hash out the details of this bill behind closed doors, rather than give the American people the opportunity to understand what is going to happen to their families."

In Ohio, a baffled Republican governor **John Kasich** [said](#) of the bill, "They think that's great? That's good public policy? What, are you kidding me?" Kasich called the bill "unacceptable" and was vocal in his criticism after the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) confirmed that the Senate's proposed legislation would leave 22 million individuals uninsured. Republican Governor **Brian Sandoval** of Nevada is also opposed to the bill, [stating that Medicaid expansion](#) has allowed over 200,000 Nevadans to "live happier and healthier lives." The Senate's bill would phase out the Medicaid expansion enacted under the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

A group of governors from all corners of the country recently wrote a [letter](#) to Senate leadership imploring them to take a bipartisan approach in reforming health care. The bill's signers included Kasich, Sandoval, and fellow Republican **Charlie Baker** of Massachusetts, as well as Democratic governors **Steve Bullock** of Montana, **John bel Edwards** of Louisiana, **John Hickenlooper** of Colorado and **Tom Wolf** of Pennsylvania.

To send a letter to your state's governor so he/she speaks up loudly and forcefully about the importance of Medicaid, [click here](#). Or, simply call 1-866-828-4162 to be connected.

"We stand with those governors who are working to save health care for seniors," said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. "Despite new proposals being discussed, the Senate bill will still force people to pay more for less care, hurting older workers, retirees and people with disabilities especially hard."

"Republicans, Democrats, Governors, and ordinary citizens are all opposed to the Senate bill. It has no other place than the trash bin," added **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance.

Activists Mobilize During Senate Recess

With Senate Republicans unable to find their way to 50 votes and the Senate now in recess, activists around the country have mobilized to make their voices heard in opposition to the [unpopular](#) bill. When Majority Leader **Mitch McConnell** (R-KY) announced that he would postpone the vote for the bill until after the recess, the Alliance and other like-minded groups began to plan actions where senators would have to face their constituents in person.



Texas Alliance members and their allies protested changes to the Affordable Care Act outside Sen. John Cornyn's office in Austin on Thursday. Austin police arrested 7 protesters, including one Texas Alliance member.

Photo credit: *Austin Statesman*

Throughout the year, the number of Republicans hosting town halls has been [dropping](#), perhaps as a way to limit exposure to protests regarding the bill, and few Republican senators made themselves available to the public during the July 4 Recess. Those who did were greeted overwhelmingly by calls to oppose the BCRA. Senators **Susan Collins** (R-ME) and **Lisa Murkowski** (R-AK) appeared at Fourth of July parades in their home states during which they were thanked overwhelmingly for their opposition to the bill. At a town hall in Texas, **Ted Cruz** (R-TX) was met by vocal protestors who were against the bill's Medicaid cuts and tax breaks for the wealthy. Sen. McConnell had to walk through a group of protestors to give his speech to a group of Republicans in Kentucky.

"It is essential that all of those who oppose this dangerous bill have their voices heard," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "The fact that most Republicans in the Senate

are too afraid to show up in public should tell you everything you need to know. The Senate bill is dangerous to all Americans, particularly older Americans, and must be stopped.”



Missouri Alliance members and allies staged a “die-in” at Sen. Roy Blunt’s Clayton office on June 28 to represent those who will die if 22 million people lose their health insurance.

Alliance Works with PBGC to Address Pension Funding Issues

Last Friday President Roach and Alliance Legislative Representative **Eva Dominguez** met with officials from the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) as part of a stakeholders meeting. They discussed the Early Warning Program, which was set up to monitor large companies with 5,000 or more participants that are under-funded by at least \$50 million and could become a liability for the PBGC. The stakeholders discussed the funding needs in both single- and multi-employer plans. The PBGC will be issuing their FY 2017 Projections Report in the very near future.

“PBGC must be properly funded to deal with the nation’s pension problems,” said President Roach. “They have the expertise but need the money. There is extraordinarily widespread support for such an increase.”

Stakeholders also discussed how to promote defined benefit (DB) plans – a traditional pension that is more secure and provides retirees with a lifelong stream of funding. The discussion

focused on providing testimonials that educate the public on the plans' many benefits and on creating modified DB plans that attract employers.

The talks included an initiative to teach labor representatives and employee activists about corporate bankruptcies that may result in pensions being terminated. The program would be taught through the State University of New York (SUNY), the Pension Rights Center and affiliated unions.

Hearing Benefit for Alliance Members & Families

To help Alliance members and their families who have concerns about hearing loss, the Alliance has teamed with Hear In America to offer a hearing benefit plan.

Registration for the plan is FREE for you and any of your extended family members. Once registered, you will be directed to reputable local providers for a FREE hearing screening and evaluation.

If needed, hearing aids are available through Hear In America at discounts up to 70% off manufacturer's suggested retail price (MSRP), with included follow-up care and loss and damage coverage for three years.

If you think you may have a hearing problem, this is a great way to get the help you need to vastly improve your quality of life. For more information or to register, call 1-800-286-6149 or click here: www.hearinamerica.com/ara.

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.