

FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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Spanish version: www.alianzadejubilados.org

South Florida Law Professor Makes Case for Expanding Social Security

In an op-ed for the [Miami Herald](#), Professor **Timothy Canova** outlines the need to expand the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program to ensure that beneficiaries can live above the poverty line. SSI provides a very basic income to older and disabled adults who do not have any other source of income. However, because it has not been updated since 1972, many of its recipients live on just \$733 per month, or 75% of the Federal Poverty line. In Florida, about 11% of seniors live in poverty, the 8th highest in the nation.

The Supplemental Security Income Restoration Act of 2015, introduced as S. 1387 in the Senate by Sen. **Sherrod Brown** (D-OH) and as H.R. 2442 in the House by Rep. **Raúl Grijalva** (D-AZ), would update the program and expand benefits for those currently receiving them. It is one of several bills to expand Social Security that the Alliance supports.

“We are pleased to be supporting this legislation,” said Alliance Secretary-Treasurer **Ruben Burks**. “Disabled older Americans should not have to live in poverty in the richest country in the world.”

Bill Introduced to Rein in Soaring Prescription Drug Prices

On Thursday Senator **Bernie Sanders** (I-VT) and Representative **Elijah Cummings** (D-MD) introduced a comprehensive piece of legislation to reduce the price that Americans pay for prescription drugs. The measure would allow the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate drug prices with pharmaceutical companies, which would bring down costs for Medicare drug benefits. In addition, it would impose stiffer penalties on drug companies that commit fraud and make it easier for consumers to purchase lower-cost generic drugs. The Alliance strongly supports this legislation which would help seniors, and all consumers, afford the medicines they need. Read more about the bill [here](#).

Congress Remains at an Impasse Over Social Security Disability Insurance

National Journal this week [reported](#) that House Republicans continue to work on a proposal to “reform” the Social Security disability program to increase the incentive to go back to work, a long-time goal of Congressman **Paul Ryan** (R-WI). If Congress fails to enact an administrative fix by late 2016, benefits to 9 million disabled workers and their families will be cut by 20 percent.

“We need to vigorously oppose Paul Ryan’s efforts to weaken the Social Security system by chipping away at pieces of it,” said **Barbara Easterling**, Alliance President. “We will not be drawn into a false battle between retirees and disabled workers and keep working to strengthen the system for current and future generations.”

Iowa Alliance Convention a Success

The Iowa Alliance for Retired Americans held its 8th annual convention Thursday in Altoona. **Jan Laue** retired as President and **Midge Slater** was elected to replace her. **Norm Sterzenbach** was re-elected Executive Vice President, **Greg Lewis** was elected Secretary, and **Bob Connett** was re-elected Treasurer.

Don Rowen, past Iowa Alliance President and retired Executive Vice President of the Iowa Federation of Labor AFL-CIO was honored with the George Kourpisd Service to Seniors Award. Alliance President emeritus George Kourpisd himself presented the award. Former Senator Tom Harkin addressed the convention by video. Alliance Executive Director **Rich Fiesta** delivered the keynote address and thanked Jan for her outstanding work. The convention participants also attended workshops on elder abuse and creating an economy that works for all Americans.

The Alliance for Retired Americans is a national organization that advocates for the rights and well-being of over 4.3 million retirees and their families.