

# FRIDAY ALERT



**Alliance for Retired Americans**

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

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## Alliance Elects Robert Roach as President, Joseph Peters as Secretary-Treasurer



*Incoming President Robert Roach, Jr. with Executive Director Richard Fiesta*

**Robert Roach, Jr.** of the Bronx, New York, was elected on Monday as the new President of the Alliance, succeeding **Barbara Easterling**. **Joseph Peters** of Rochester Hills, Michigan was elected Secretary-Treasurer, following **Ruben Burks**. The votes occurred during a meeting of the Alliance's Executive Committee and take effect on October 1, 2015. **Richard Fiesta** will continue to serve as Executive Director.

"I am honored and excited to be joining a strong organization with a critical mission," said Roach. "Educating and mobilizing retirees is more important than ever."

Roach started his career as a ramp serviceman for TWA in 1975 and was a member of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) Local Lodge 1056 in New York. He was elected to and held several union leadership positions including serving as the General Secretary-Treasurer of the IAM from 2012 until his retirement in July 2015. He currently serves as an Auditor for the International Trade Union Confederation and is a board member of the Pension Rights Center.

Peters began his career at the Ford Motor Company. He was elected to a leadership position in the United Auto Workers (UAW) in 1978 and rose through the UAW ranks, culminating in his serving as regional director of UAW Region 1.

"After a lifetime of work, Americans deserve a secure retirement. The Alliance has an important role to play in making sure that the rights of older Americans are protected," said Peters.

**Richard Trumka**, President of the AFL-CIO, conveyed his full confidence in Roach and Peters. “With retirees such a key part of the labor movement, we need strong leadership at the Alliance for Retired Americans. With Robert Roach and Joseph Peters, we will continue to have exactly the right people in place to fight to keep Social Security and Medicare strong for both current and future retirees.”

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer **Elizabeth Shuler**, who is also Executive Vice President of the Alliance, expressed thanks to Easterling and Burks for their years of service to the organization, saying, “They have been terrific leaders and critical to the Alliance’s success defeating many efforts to privatize Medicare and cut Social Security benefits over the years.”

## **House Speaker John Boehner to Give up Gavel, Resign from Congress**

Speaker of the House **John Boehner** unexpectedly announced today that he will resign and retire from Congress on October 30th. The stunning declaration came as conservatives in his party pressured him to shut down the government and throws Congress into chaos. However, on Friday morning [top House sources say](#) there will not be a government shutdown. Who the next Speaker will be is not immediately known. Boehner has a 3% lifetime voting record with the Alliance.

"We need to prepare for the possibility that the U.S. House will now be even more extreme and anti-senior through the 2016 elections," said Fiesta.

## **Alliance Activists Call on Congress to Stand Up for Seniors, Prevent Giveaway to Drug Companies**



To raise awareness about the pharmaceutical industry’s effort to secure a special exemption from the Inter Partes Review (IPR) process, the Alliance has launched a new campaign with press conferences in Burlington, Vermont, Chicago and Minneapolis. At the urging of certain drug companies, some members of Congress are trying to quietly remove only drug

companies from the IPR process, which was put into place to allow for timely challenges to illegitimate patents. Illegitimate drug patents are one of the causes of rising drug prices, such as when a company changes a dosage amount in order to extend a monopoly and stop affordable generic drugs from being available to consumers. Special treatment for the pharmaceutical industry would cost taxpayers billions in higher prescription drug prices.

“Americans pay the highest prescription drug prices in the world and seniors are particularly hard hit,” said Fiesta. “We are calling on members of Congress to stand up for consumers, taxpayers and seniors by opposing a special carve-out for drug companies from IPR patent review.”

The Vermont Alliance held their press event in front of **Sen. Patrick Leahy’s office**, and the Illinois Alliance organized their event with Rep. **Jan Schakowsky** in front of a Chicago pharmacy. An additional protest is planned for Minneapolis in October. Read an op-ed from Vermont Alliance president **Jane Osgatharp** [here](#).

### **Scott Walker Drops out of Race for Republican Presidential Nomination**

Immediately after Wisconsin Gov. **Scott Walker** (R) dropped out of the 2016 GOP presidential race on Monday, **Timothy Noah** and **Brian Mahoney** of *Politico* [wrote](#), “No one is happier than organized labor to see Scott Walker drop out of the 2016 contest.”

A labor-backed effort to recall Walker failed in 2012 after Walker pushed through a bill drastically reducing public employees’ bargaining rights. Walker then won re-election in 2014. Earlier this year, Walker had made Wisconsin the country’s 25th right-to-work “for less” state, enabling public and private workers to benefit from contracts negotiated by a union on their behalf without any legal requirement to pay union dues.

### **Alliance is looking for Members’ Student Debt Stories**

A recent *Friday Alert* brought attention to the fact that more than 160,000 Social Security beneficiaries are currently having their monthly benefits garnished to pay outstanding student debts. This comes at a time when student debt has quadrupled since 2003 and America is facing a \$7.7 trillion retiree savings gap. The garnishment of Social Security benefits to pay debts used to be illegal. However, in 1996, Congress passed a law that stripped those protections from people who owed debts to the Federal government – and 86% of student debts are government-owned.

**If the government is dipping its hands into your benefits, the Alliance would like to hear your story.** Please e-mail [aracommunications@retiredamericans.org](mailto:aracommunications@retiredamericans.org) to tell us about your situation.