

# FRIDAY ALERT



**Alliance for Retired Americans**

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

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## House Republican Budget is a Frontal Assault on Seniors' Needs

This week, Congressional Republicans put forward a version of a Fiscal Year 2016 Budget that contains cuts to Medicare beneficiaries and threatens Social Security. Alliance Executive Director **Richard Fiesta** issued a statement on Wednesday saying “the budget plan put forward by House Republicans today is a frontal assault on the needs of seniors, persons with disabilities and working Americans. It would privatize critical aspects of Medicare, gut Medicaid and drastically reduce support for persons with disabilities. ...It also signals that the Republican leadership is interested in going after Social Security, which keeps 22 million older Americans out of poverty.” Read Fiesta’s full statement at <http://tinyurl.com/lgsht7x>.

## House Seeks to Implement Medicare “Doc Fix”; Replace Sustainable Growth Rate

House Speaker **John Boehner** and Minority Leader **Nancy Pelosi** have been negotiating a long-term deal to resolve issues with Medicare funding. Currently, Medicare legislation requires a series of short term adjustments to the Sustainable Growth Rate, called “Doc Fix,” that prevents funding cuts to doctors.

Alliance Executive Director **Richard Fiesta** said that, “We are monitoring the deal closely, as we have concerns that this agreement could put a significant burden on current beneficiaries.”

According media reports, this deal would remove the Sustainable Growth Rate, a formula that determines changes in compensation, and replace it with a new payment system. Preliminary reports also indicate that beneficiaries with incomes higher than \$133,000 would pay higher premiums and Medigap plans with first dollar coverage would incur a deductible. Read more at:

<http://tinyurl.com/mxtvt7x>

## Bills to Expand Social Security Benefits Introduced

Senator **Bernie Sanders (I-VT)** introduced legislation last week that would expand Social Security benefits by about \$65 a month for most recipients. The bill also increases cost-of-living adjustments for Social Security recipients in line with the CPI-E and provide a minimum Social Security benefit for retirees.

Sen. Sanders' plan would significantly improve Social Security’s financing by eliminating the cap on Social Security contributions for earnings above \$250,000 a year. It would also expand the system's revenue base to include high-income households' unearned income. Read more about the Sanders bill in *The Hill*: <http://thehill.com/blogs/floor-action/235682-sanders-wants-to-increase-taxes-to-bolster-social-security>

Rep. **John Larson**'s (D-CT) also introduced a bill to expand Social Security benefits this week. This legislation would provide- larger cost of living increases for retirees and disabled workers and raise the income cap on Social Security taxes (currently \$118,500) to \$400,000.

Alliance President **Barbara Easterling** commented on these developments. "We can and must expand Social Social Security benefits and extend the financial health of the system." More at: <http://tinyurl.com/lp6ttdr>

### **Oregon Convention**

On Saturday, March 14<sup>th</sup> the Oregon State Alliance held its convention in Portland. The membership made plans to continue to fight for Social Security, celebrate the anniversaries of these important programs, and oppose fast track and unfair trade deals. Alliance Executive Director **Richard Fiesta** and **Chuck Sheketoff**, Director of the Oregon Center for Public Policy spoke as well. The Oregon Alliance members amended their bylaws, elected a new Treasurer, **Geri Nelson**, and reelected President **Scott Blau**, Vice President **Linda DeLucia** and Secretary **Leanne Hakala**.

### **Medicare Turns 50:**

Upon the passage of Medicare, President Lyndon Johnson said that, "No longer will young families see their own incomes, and their own hopes, eaten away simply because they are carrying out their deep moral obligations to their parents, and to their uncles, and their aunts.

Medicare helps give millions seniors and families of seniors the financial security they need. Learn more about the history of Medicare on the Alliance website:

[http://retiredamericans.org/members/Medicare\\_Turns\\_50](http://retiredamericans.org/members/Medicare_Turns_50)

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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.