

FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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Spanish version: www.alianzadejubilados.org

President Delivers Final State of the Union Address - Mentions Social Security, Medicare, TPP

President **Obama** gave his final State of the Union address on Tuesday night and called on Congress to strengthen Social Security and Medicare. Earlier in the day Alliance members held events in 20 cities to highlight opposition to the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal, which was mentioned in the speech.

“The Alliance for Retired Americans applauds President Obama for shining the light on the plight of working and retired Americans, who often cannot expect to retire with dignity after a lifetime of working hard and playing by the rules,” said Alliance President **Robert Roach, Jr.** in a [statement](#).

“The Alliance will continue to work with President Obama and the next President toward the goals of strong Social Security and Medicare programs, pension protections, fair trade deals, and affordable prescription drug prices, and we will join with like-minded groups to achieve those goals.”

A selection of [photos](#) from the TPP events show energetic activists spreading the message that the deal would lock in high prescription drug prices. In addition to local print, radio, and television coverage in several cities, the actions were mentioned in [The Washington Post](#). Dozens of allies and partners assisted with crowd building, signage and media outreach.

New CFPB Guide Helps Retirees Make Pension Decisions

Every year thousands of Americans reaching retirement age are faced with the decision of whether to take their traditional pension in a monthly payment or in a lump sum. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) has released a [guide](#) to help consumers navigate this important decision.

When employees choose a lump-sum payout instead of a monthly pension payment, the responsibility for managing and investing the pension money shifts from the employer to the employee. For some people this is intimidating, and could put them at risk of outliving their money, or losing their money due to poor stock market performance, bad investment advice, or fraud.

“It is important to remember that in addition to paying income taxes, you will owe an additional 10 percent penalty tax if you take a lump-sum payout before age 59½,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “It is worth checking this guide if you are faced with this decision.”

Economic Policy Institute: Too Many Seniors are Working or Poor

The United States ranks eighth among 35 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries in the share of 65- to 69-year-olds who are employed, according to a new [report](#) from the Economic Policy Institute.

Thirty percent of 65- to 69-year-olds in the U.S. are employed, versus 20 percent in OECD countries on average. One explanation for why Americans are less likely to retire is that our retirement system replaces a lower share of pre-retirement income.

The numbers do not always follow the trends of other age groups. France, for instance, has the same employment rate for workers in their late 50s as the U.S., but has a much lower employment rate for workers in their late 60s.

Due to high income inequality, the United States also has a high senior poverty rate. This situation is likely to get worse, as many seniors today receive traditional pensions in addition to Social Security, whereas future seniors will rely more heavily on inadequate 401(k) plans.

“Some might say it is possible that American seniors enjoy working more than their counterparts in Europe and Canada, but I doubt that very much,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “The data offers further evidence that we need to expand our earned Social Security benefits.”

Hawaii Alliance Holds its Convention with Governor Ige, Honolulu Mayor Caldwell



More than 100 delegates and guests attended the Hawaii Alliance’s convention in Honolulu on Saturday. Re-elected to their positions during the conference were: President **Justin Wong**; Vice President **Elmer Yuen**; Secretary **Carol Noland**; and Treasurer **Phyllis Hiramatsu**. Hawaii Governor **David Ige**; Honolulu Mayor **Kirk Caldwell**; Mr. Roach and Mr. Fiesta were featured speakers.

Delegates also passed resolutions opposing the TPP agreement; supporting a plan to finance long term care through an increase in the state's General Excise Tax; and honoring labor leader **Yoshito Takamine**.

Come to the Alliance's 2016 Western, Southern Regional Conferences

The Alliance's quadrennial Western Regional conference will be held March 8 – 9, 2016 at the Tropicana Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada. The quadrennial Southern Regional Conference will be held March 14 – 15, 2016 at the Buena Vista Palace Hotel in Orlando, Florida. During both conferences we will elect four regional board members and prepare for the upcoming 2016 elections. More information is available online ([Western](#), [Southern](#)) or contact **Joni Jones** at jjones@retiredamericans.org or 202-637-5377.

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.