

FRIDAY ALERT



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Alliance Activists to Hold More than 20 Anti-TPP Rallies Hours before State of the Union

Alliance members and other concerned citizens will demonstrate at more than 20 rallies across the country this coming Tuesday to display their fervent opposition to the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement. President **Obama** is expected to push for passage of the TPP during his State of the Union address later that evening, January 12th. The rallies will draw attention to the fact that the TPP will lock in high prices for prescription drugs and cost American jobs.

Hundreds of advocacy groups have been asking Congress to stop the trade pact from becoming law. A coalition of more than [1,500 interest groups sent a letter](#) to Congress on Thursday demanding that lawmakers block the deal.

“Momentum for our side is building,” said Alliance President **Robert Roach, Jr.** “Once seniors learn that the TPP locks in high drug prices just so that pharmaceutical executives can line their pockets with the extra profits, there is almost always outrage. Many seniors aren’t aware yet, but that is changing. We need to increase the awareness of this issue through education.”

Find [an event near you](#), hear the stirring speakers, and show your own support for affordable prescription drugs by joining fellow activists on Tuesday!

Take Action to Make Prescription Drugs More Affordable

Perhaps you heard about **Martin Shkreli**, the hedge fund manager who raised the price of a life-saving medication from \$13 to \$750 because his company needed to “increase revenue.”

But Martin Shkreli isn’t alone. Too many pharmaceutical companies are drastically raising the prices of their prescription drugs and raking in billions in profit. Of course excessive profits come at the expense of public health. Last year alone, 35 MILLION people did not fill a prescription because they could not afford it.

[Tell Congress enough is enough!](#) It is time to hold the pharmaceutical industry accountable. These companies cannot be allowed to rake in billions in profits while price gouging our nation’s most vulnerable.

Big Pharma will do anything to protect its profits. In fact, Pfizer, the largest pharmaceutical company in the world, is merging with an overseas company and moving their headquarters overseas to avoid taxes on their \$148 billion in profits.

The pharmaceutical industry has spent millions to influence Congress. We need your help to combat them. Please take action and tell Congress to put public interest ahead of corporate profits.

President Obama Vetoes Attempt to Repeal the Affordable Care Act

Republican lawmakers continue to wage a losing war against the Affordable Care Act (ACA). After more than sixty failed attempts to roll back all or part of the law, the House passed a bill on Wednesday repealing President **Obama's** signature legislation. The vote was largely along party lines, 240 to 181. Speaker **Paul Ryan** then signed the legislation and sent it to the President on Thursday.

There was never any chance that the bill would become law, since the President had vowed to veto any legislation gutting or repealing the ACA. He vetoed it on Friday. Despite the lack of votes to override the veto, Speaker Ryan still intends to try.

"No matter which side of the aisle you fall, there is no denying that more people are insured now than six years ago. In fact it's 17 million more," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "Seniors benefit from health care reform because it closed the donut hole gap in prescription drug coverage and offers free, increased preventive care."



***New York Times*: The Time for Social Security Expansion is Now**

The New York Times editorial board [wrote](#) on Saturday that we need to expand Social Security.

"It was a wonderful way to start the new year – and a fitting position, given that Social Security recipients will not receive a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) in 2016," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance.

A recent study by the GAO found that 52% of households with someone 55 or older have no retirement savings. Only half of those will receive any type of company pension. In 2013, only 44 percent of workers on the bottom half of the income scale had a retirement plan at work. That was down from 54 percent in 1995, according to data from the Federal Reserve.

Nearly all of the Republican candidates for President in 2016 have called for cuts to Social Security benefits, even though Social Security benefits help keep 26 million seniors above the poverty line.

To expand earned benefits, the Alliance supports implementing a new formula for determining future Social Security COLAs: the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly (CPI-E). It is a fix that will address the possibility of a 0% COLA happening once more in 2017 and repeatedly in later years. Currently we use the CPI for clerical workers (CPI-W) to determine COLAs. Using the CPI-E would be a more accurate measure.

The CPI--W takes into greater account factors such as fuel prices, apparel, and education that disproportionately affect younger Americans. The CPI-E would base the calculation on what seniors actually spend their money on. That list includes items such as health care and housing. It is a far more accurate measure than the CPI-W.

Using the CPI--E would have provided seniors with a small COLA in 2016, and would prevent further, unfair and inaccurate adjustments in the future.

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.