

FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

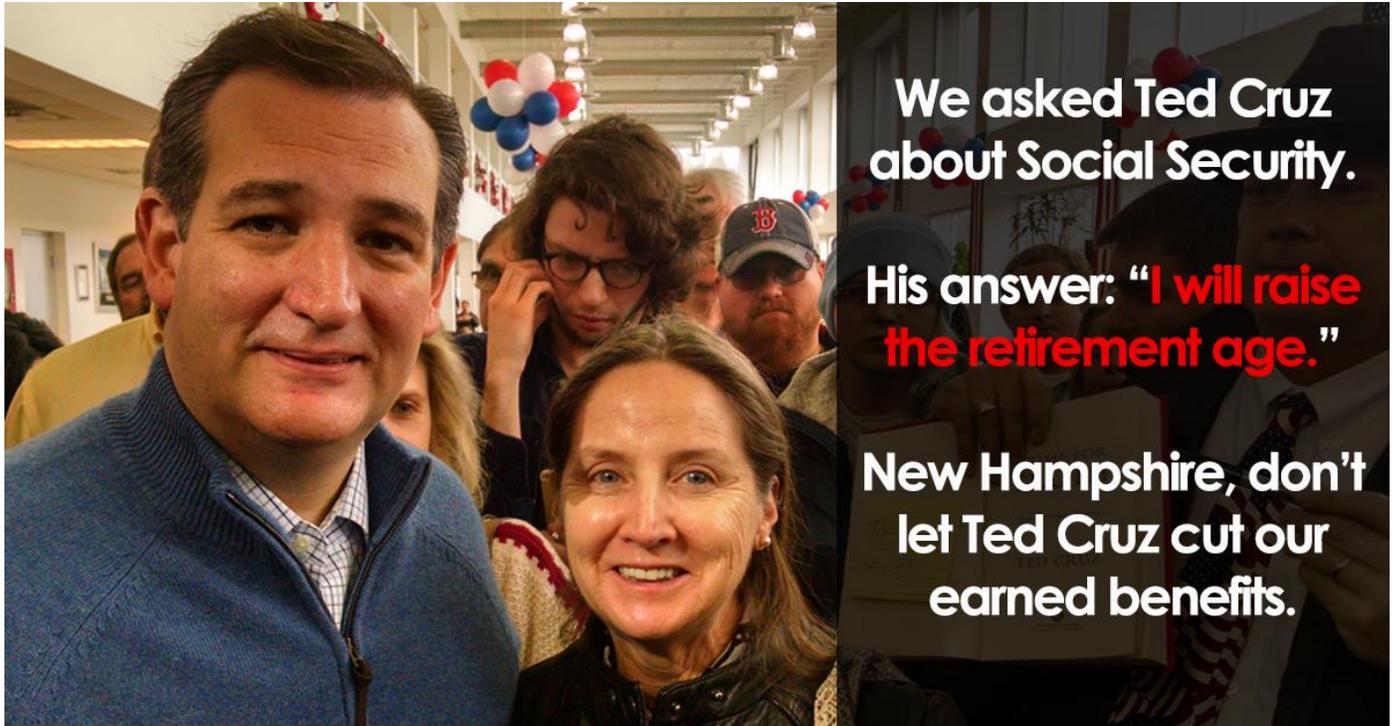
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Warning to New Hampshire Republican Primary Voters: Iowa's Top 3 Come with Baggage



The Iowa caucus results on the Republican side are in, and the three presidential contenders with the most delegates are Sen. **Ted Cruz**, with 27.6% of the caucus votes, **Donald Trump** (24.3%), and Sen. **Marco Rubio** (23.1%).

“Ted Cruz, Donald Trump, and Marco Rubio have all endorsed policies that would be extremely detrimental to seniors’ retirement security,” said Alliance President **Robert Roach, Jr.** “New Hampshire voters who care about Social Security, Medicare, and prescription drug prices should consider all of the candidates’ records carefully before voting.”

On Thursday, New England Alliance Senior Field Organizer **Jenny Kenny** asked Sen. Cruz about Social Security while in New Hampshire, and he confirmed to her that he wants to raise the [retirement age](#). He would also privatize Social Security using the [George W. Bush model](#) and is open to means testing those earned benefits.

Donald Trump has his own plans for seniors. Asked by ABC News’ **George Stephanopoulos** about [phasing out](#) Medicare with private savings accounts, said, “I’m OK with the savings accounts. I think it’s a good idea.”

Trump's statements in support of letting Medicare negotiate drug prices has gained attention but his policies are especially [ill-defined](#). He has also said that he would repeal Obamacare, which provides expanded [preventive health care](#) services for the approximately 48 million seniors currently on Medicare and closes the so-called doughnut hole coverage gap in Medicare's prescription drug benefit. Rubio and Cruz share this position.

Sen. Rubio has said that Social Security "weakened us as a people," campaigned on its privatization, and – like Cruz – wants to [raise](#) the full retirement age for collecting earned benefits. He [told](#) supporters in New Hampshire that he plans to raise the retirement age for Social Security and privatize Medicare.

In addition, Rubio supported the 2011 Paul Ryan budget plan, which would have increased out-of-pocket costs for the typical Medicare patient by more than \$6,000 a year. Rubio has said that he still supports the Ryan plan. [Sun-Sentinel, [5/10/11](#)]

Call Your U.S. Representative and Senators on February 8th and 9th to Stop the TPP

The AFL-CIO is leading a national "Trade Call-In Days" on Monday, February 8th, and Tuesday, February 9th, to help stop the passage of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). The Alliance will be taking part in this action along with other allied groups across the country.

You can take part in this effort by dialing 1-855-856-7545 on February 8th and 9th, and telling your member of Congress and Senators to VOTE NO on the TPP.

When you call, you can use these [talking points](#). Stress that this is not the time to support an agreement that could further increase drug costs to consumers and the government while lining the pockets of the pharmaceutical industry. We will send all Alliance activists an e-mail on Monday with more details about the Call-In campaign.

"It's time to make trade work for seniors and working Americans and not just the top 1 percent," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance.

Alliance to Oversight Committee: Prescription Drug Prices Often "Sickening and Immoral"

Prescription drug prices were the subject of a much-awaited [hearing](#) before the U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform yesterday. The star witness was **Martin Shkreli**, the former CEO of Turing Pharmaceutical. He made headlines for raising the price of Daraprim – often used to treat HIV and AIDS – from \$13.50 to \$750 per pill. Shkreli took the Fifth Amendment and refused to answer questions. He is under indictment on federal securities fraud charges.

The Alliance [wrote](#) to Committee Chairman **Jason Chaffetz** (R-UT) and Ranking Member **Elijah Cummings** (D-MD) just before the hearing to express deep concerns over the exorbitant increases in drug prices for off patent drugs.

During a recent Senate Aging Committee hearing several suggestions were discussed to stop this abuse. These included developing a registry of off-patent drugs and providing for a priority review process to help expedite the Food and Drug Administration's approval process of generics in these cases.

“The revelations last year that pharmaceutical companies and their hedge fund managers were buying the rights to off-patent drugs to make money is sickening and immoral,” the letter from Executive Director **Richard Fiesta** to Chaffetz and Cummings declared.

The letter also states that drug companies have callously decided to increase the price of drugs, some by as much as 5,000 percent, for no other reason than greed.

Many of these drugs, which have been around for years and were relatively inexpensive, are used to treat patients with heart ailments, cancer and HIV. These are the sickest and frailest of patients but they often find themselves with no alternatives and unable to afford the drugs.

Mark Your Calendars – Midwest Regional Conference Dates Announced

The Alliance’s quadrennial [Midwest](#) Regional Conference will be held May 4-5, 2016 at the MGM Grand Hotel in Detroit, Michigan.

As announced previously, the Alliance's quadrennial [Western](#) Regional Conference will be held March 8–9, 2016 at the Tropicana Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada, and the quadrennial [Southern](#) Regional conference will be held March 29–30, 2016 at the Buena Vista Palace Hotel in Orlando, Florida. The deadline for securing discounted hotel reservations for the Western Regional Conference is Monday, February 8th.

During each conference we will elect four regional board members and prepare for the 2016 general election. Questions? Contact **Joni Jones** at jjones@retiredamericans.org or 202-637-5377.