

FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

815 16th Street, NW, Fourth Floor • Washington, DC 20006 • 202.637.5399

www.retiredamericans.org • aracommunications@retiredamericans.org

Spanish version: www.alianzadejubilados.org

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President Obama Nominates Social Security Trustee Who Promoted Privatization to Second Term

President Obama recently nominated [Charles Blahous](#) and Robert Reischauer to second terms as Social Security and Medicare Public Trustees and this week the Senate Finance Committee held confirmation hearings for both nominees.



The Alliance and numerous other organizations that support Social Security, strongly opposes the Blahous renomination. He is far from a neutral expert on social insurance but served as the executive director of former President George W. Bush's "Commission to Strengthen Social Security." That Commission developed plans to privatize Social Security, which were soundly rejected by the Congress. Blahous is affiliated with the conservative Mercatus Center.

"As a Mercatus Center fellow Blahous has said that Social Security is [too generous to retirees](#) and advocated against ways to strengthen the system," said Robert Roach, President of the Alliance. "It is not appropriate for a trustee, whose job is to ensure the continued viability of the Social Security system to be actively working against it."

Help us keep Charles Blahous from serving another term as a Social Security Trustee. Please click to tell your Senator to oppose this nomination <https://actionnetwork.org/letters/a-fox-guarding-the-social-security-hen-house>

More Evidence that Americans' Retirement Security is at Risk

A United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) [report](#) released this month found that defined contribution (DC) plans don't have the participation levels, especially in lower income and minority households, to create enough savings for retirement.

A defined contribution plan, such as a 401 (k), is characterized by the fact that participants make their own contributions, saving for their own retirement.

This is in contrast to a defined benefit (DB) plan - a company pension plan in which employees' pension payments are calculated according to length of service and the salary they earned at the time of retirement.

An estimated 40 percent of all U.S. households had some retirement savings in a defined contribution (DC) plan in 2013. But 60 percent of all households, and 44 percent of working households, had no retirement savings at all in 2013. Low-income, African-American and Hispanic households were least likely to have access to a DC plan at their workplaces or to have DC savings.

"Once again we see that the shift to 401(k) plans has failed to ensure Americans with a secure retirement," said Joe Peters, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "This experiment has enriched Wall Street CEOs and cost working families. It only reinforces our commitment to fight for traditional pension plans for all workers"

New Law Will Disenfranchise Arizona Voters

A new law in Arizona makes collecting and turning in early ballots (sometimes called [ballot harvesting](#)) for individuals unable to physically go the polls a class 6 felony according to an article by Arizona PBS. The law goes into effect in November and carries with it a minimum a six-month prison sentence.

The new law, disguised as voter fraud prevention, will have a disproportionate impact on low mobility seniors who rely on others to get their ballot counted.

"This is clearly an attempt by the Arizona Republican party to disenfranchise hundreds of thousands of voters," said Richard Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance. "Voter suppression has an ugly history and it's where it should be left."

Organizations that have provided this service in the past will have to find new ways to ensure these voices are not ignored. Some have said they will help by providing reminders of the mail in deadline, go door to door to help with translations, and provide shuttle services to the polls.

Arizona's law against "ballot harvesting" is the strictest in the United States. Many experts fear that the law will have a serious negative effect on voter turnout in the state.

Northeast Regional Conference

Monday is the last day to [register online](#) for the Northeast Regional Conference in Washington, DC on May 19-20. During the conference members 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.

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.