

# FRIDAY ALERT



**Alliance for Retired Americans**

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

[www.retiredamericans.org](http://www.retiredamericans.org) • [aracommunications@retiredamericans.org](mailto:aracommunications@retiredamericans.org)

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

**July 1, 2016**

## **Retirees Strongly Endorse Hillary Clinton for President**

On Wednesday, the Alliance for Retired Americans executive board voted enthusiastically to [endorse](#) Secretary **Hillary Clinton** for President.



“Hillary Clinton has been a champion for retirees throughout her distinguished career. Her life’s work exemplifies the Alliance’s mission to enhance the quality of life for all Americans,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance.

He added, “She has pledged to strengthen and expand Social Security, and she will oppose efforts to cut, privatize or shift Medicare costs to retirees. We are confident she will work to rein in the uncontrolled prices of prescription drugs which are far outpacing the rate of inflation and forcing too many retirees to choose between food and medicine.”

“She has an unmatched record of public service and earned a lifetime score of 100% from the Alliance for her pro-retiree votes as a U.S. Senator,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “We encourage all of our members to vote for her and to bring at least two other voters to the polls with them.”



President Roach swears in the Alliance's new board members. Left to right - Kathleen "Kitty" Kennedy, Edward Manhart, Robert Martinez, Jr., Ken Goodfriend, Laura Reynolds, Roger Boudreau, and Hene Kelly. Not pictured: Sherry Dennis, Susan Flashman, Doug Hart, Steve Kofahl, Nancy Olumekor, Ken Pease, Jim Rivers, Paul Schuh and Robin Williams.

## **Final Draft of Democratic Party Platform Includes Social Security Expansion**

On Saturday the Democratic Platform Committee released a final draft of the party's platform after hearing testimony from 114 witnesses including **Kitty Kennedy**, an Alliance member from Tucson.

The draft platform calls for expanding earned Social Security benefits and achieving this goal by collecting Social Security payroll taxes on some income above \$250,000. Currently, millionaires pay the same amount in Social Security taxes as those who earn \$118,500. The document also pledges to fight Social Security privatization and benefit cuts.

The draft platform also calls for addressing skyrocketing prescription drug prices, which Kennedy strongly pushed for, such as by allowing Medicare to negotiate directly with pharmaceutical companies on behalf of beneficiaries and taxpayers.

"The Alliance applauds the Platform Committee's support for expanding Social Security and Medicare as well as tackling prescription drug costs," said Secretary-Treasurer Peters. "By making these issues a priority, Democrats will ensure that retirees receive their hard-earned Social Security benefits, protect the health of millions of older Americans, and enable seniors to afford to fill their prescriptions."

## **Tell Your Member of Congress You Want Funding Restored for Medicare SHIP Program**

The U.S. House Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee will soon vote on funding for the Medicare State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), which provides local, in-depth insurance counseling and assistance to Medicare beneficiaries, their families and caregivers. SHIP assists in a wide range of issues from appeals rights to fraud, abuse, and billing problems to enrollment in low-income protection programs.

The Senate Appropriations Committee has proposed to defund SHIP and leave 55 million Medicare beneficiaries without access to this free, personalized, and unbiased counseling service. Approximately 10,000 Americans become eligible for Medicare each day.

[Click here to tell your member of Congress that you want SHIP funding restored.](#)

SHIP funding is currently \$52.1 million, but has not kept up with inflation and the increasing number of Americans eligible for Medicare.

“The Alliance urges the House to provide the support and assistance needed by the millions of seniors who rely on Medicare,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “SHIP helps millions of Americans understand Medicare coverage and make well-informed decisions about their care. We must protect this funding.”

### **HHS Proposal to Streamline Medicare Appeals Process**

On Tuesday, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) proposed [measures](#) to address the backlog of 700,000 Medicare appeals cases.

The proposal hopes to streamline the process and reduce the backlog. Currently, appellants wait roughly two years for a decision after their hearing date. To shorten this wait period, HHS would limit the number of cases that reach the third level of appeals, which accounts for a majority of the backlog.

Changes to the appeals process include establishing precedents from the Medicare Appeals Council to prevent redundancy; allowing senior attorneys to address preliminary procedures so judges have more freedom to preside over cases; and revising appeal eligibility.

Proposed changes will be published in detail and available for comments on the [Federal Registrar website](#) on August 29.