

FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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Spanish version: www.alianzadejubilados.org

Alliance Member Speaks at Capitol Hill Celebration of Social Security and Medicare

Maryland/DC Alliance member **Diane Fleming** spoke at a celebration of Medicare's 51st anniversary and Social Security 81st anniversary on Capitol Hill on Wednesday. Retirees, members of Congress and allies honored Medicare's and Social Security's accomplishments and expressed support for their futures.



Diane Fleming.

"It is so appropriate that we are having this event around Independence Day," said Ms. Fleming. "Social Security and Medicare have enabled me to remain independent. We intend to make sure they are still strong for us, for our children, and for our grandchildren. And I know I speak for millions of seniors when I say that."

Other speakers and attendees included House Democratic Leader **Nancy Pelosi** (CA) and Reps. **Xavier Becerra** (CA), **Lois Frankel** (FL), **Eddie Bernice Johnson** (TX), **Marcy Kaptur** (OH), **Dave Loebsack** (IA), **Doris Matsui** (CA), **Lucille Roybal-Allard** (CA), **Raul Ruiz** (CA), **Jan Schakowsky** (IL), **Bobby Scott** (VA), and **Norma Torres** (CA).

The Alliance plans further celebrations around Medicare's 51st anniversary on July 30 and Social Security's 81st anniversary on August 14. All of the events will draw attention to the need to preserve and expand Medicare's guaranteed health benefits and Social Security to keep seniors, survivors, people with disabilities, and children out of poverty and secure in retirement.



Maryland/DC Alliance President Jim Baldrige and House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi celebrate the Social Security and Medicare anniversaries.

Clinton and Trump on Social Security

Last week Secretary **Hillary Clinton** and **Donald Trump** wrote [articles](#) on their approaches to Social Security which discussed the program's solvency and how they would ensure benefits reflect beneficiaries' needs.

Secretary Clinton stressed the importance of expanding benefits and ensuring all Americans pay their fair share into the program. Once elected, Secretary Clinton would expand benefits, prevent decreases in the cost-of-living adjustment and raise the cap on earnings subject to the Social Security payroll tax. She also vowed to fight efforts to privatize Social Security and raise the retirement age.

Trump's plan does not get very specific, according to [Politico](#). He focused more broadly on economic reforms and a pro-growth agenda. He promised to repeal the Dodd-Frank and Affordable Care Acts and to "increase competition and lower costs to consumers." Trump cited budget discipline and tax reform including a corporate tax cut to shore up programs like Social Security.

"We need a president with a commitment to expanding earned benefits for millions of Americans and ensuring Social Security is there for future generations," said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. "Clearly that is Hillary Clinton."

Study: Brand-Name Drugs' High Copays Hurt Medicare Part D Beneficiaries

On Wednesday, a report by the journal [Health Affairs](#) found that Medicare Part D patients in 2013 paid 10.5 times more in copayments for brand-name drugs such as Crestor and Nexium, compared to their generic equivalents. The average copayments for brand-name drugs were \$42, while the generic versions only cost beneficiaries \$4.

“Prescription costs are out of control,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “It is unacceptable that Medicare beneficiaries spend over 10 times as much for brand-name drugs as generic drugs. We need to stop unfair drug and insurance corporation rebate deals that allow brand name drugs to be labeled ‘preferred.’”

The report says seniors are often left to pay for the cost of brand-name prescriptions, co-pays, and elevated premiums. It is estimated that patients, taxpayers, and insurance companies would have saved roughly \$2 billion had doctors prescribed the generic equivalents of Crestor and Nexium, taken respectively for cholesterol and acid reflux.

In 2012, half of Medicare Part D enrollees earned less than \$22,500. Researchers said high co-pays are forcing seniors “to choose between food or medications based on their monthly budget.”

Indiana Alliance for Retired Americans Holds Annual Convention

Last Thursday nearly 100 members attended the Indiana Alliance for Retired Americans annual convention in Indianapolis. Speakers included **Elmer Blankenship**, Indiana Alliance President; **Ken Lortz**, UAW regional director for Ohio and Indiana; and **Tim Foley**, an Alliance regional board member.

Author **Burl Adkins**, who wrote **Common Sense Part 2**, spoke about his personal experience of homelessness on his way to becoming a featured speaker on U.S. trade, manufacturing, and tax policies. Indiana Alliance board member **John Cardwell** spoke about his own short stories and poems.

The Alliance for Retired Americans is a national organization that advocates for the rights and well-being of over 4.4 million retirees and their families.