

FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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United Mine Workers Hold “Keep the Promise” Rally on Capitol Hill

Alliance members joined the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) as they rallied in front of the Capitol on Thursday in support of the Miners’ Protection Act. The legislation would protect the pensions and health care funds for 120,000 retired miners and their families. Speakers included Sens. **Sherrod Brown** (D-OH), **Bob Casey** (D-PA) and **Joe Manchin** (D-WV).



Richard Fiesta (right), Executive Director of the Alliance, with members of UMWA Thursday

Despite bipartisan support for the Miners’ Protection Act, it has not been brought to the floor for a vote. Senate Majority Leader **Mitch McConnell** (R-KY) has been [blocking](#) its passage since December. If this bill is not passed, thousands of mineworkers will lose their health care and pension benefits at the end of this year. **Please contact your legislators and tell them to hold the vote on S. 1714 and H.R. 2403 at <http://umwa.org>.**

“It is inexcusable that Senator McConnell continues to stop any movement on this bill,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “Miners have worked extremely hard all their lives and deserve the pensions and health care they were promised. We must come together to support the mine workers and their fight for retirement security.”

Reps. Linda Sánchez and Mike Honda Introduce the Strengthening Social Security Act of 2016

At a press conference Friday, **Reps. Linda Sánchez** (D-CA) and **Mike Honda** (D-CA) discussed the introduction of H.R. 5952, the Strengthening Social Security Act of 2016 on Capitol Hill. Maryland/DC Alliance member **Diane Fleming** spoke, joining other allies in expressing their support for the bill.

"Seniors are struggling to make ends meet," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance, who also spoke at the event. "This bill would give the average beneficiary an additional \$800 per year to help pay their living expenses and we applaud Representatives Sanchez and Honda for introducing it."

The bill would change the way that cost of living increases are calculated to more accurately reflect the living expenses of Social Security beneficiaries.

In addition, it strengthens the Social Security system and extends the solvency of the Social Security Trust Fund into 2048 by gradually eliminating the payroll tax cap, so that millionaires and billionaires contribute their fair share.

"The Strengthening Social Security Act would increase earned Social Security benefits across the board: for retirees, for the disabled, and for survivors of deceased workers," Fiesta added.

In 2013, Rep. Sanchez first introduced the Strengthening Social Security Act in the U.S. House. The bill was the House companion to legislation previously introduced in the U.S. Senate by **Tom Harkin** of Iowa.

BCTGM Workers Strike for their Pension Benefits

On Wednesday, over 400 members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers (BCTGM) Local 6 in Philadelphia went on [strike](#) against the Just Born candy company, the maker of Peeps and Mike and Ike candies. The company wants to eliminate the workers' defined benefit pension plan, increase their health insurance costs, and limit wage increases. Union workers voted to strike to maintain the benefits and standard of living they earned over decades of service on September 2.

"It is terrible when companies like Just Born discount the hard work and dedication of their employees," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "We stand with the BCTGM workers fighting to preserve their hard-earned benefits and retire with dignity."

Study Finds Benefits When Seniors Call More of the Shots

Kaiser Health News reported Wednesday on a federally funded [project](#) that researchers say has potential to promote aging in place. The study began by asking low-income seniors with disabilities how their lives at home could be better and listening to their own input.

At the end of the program, 75 percent of participants were able to perform more daily activities than they could previously, and symptoms of depression also improved, researchers said in the journal *Health Affairs*. Called Community Aging in Place, Advancing Better Living for Elders, or

CAPABLE for short, the program was funded by the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation. Read more: <http://ow.ly/Wp9z3043KTO>.

Willie Nelson Makes a Video Supporting the Postal Service

A Grand Alliance, the coalition to save the United States Postal Service and postal jobs, released a heartwarming new [video](#) featuring **Willie Nelson**, the musician, activist and founder of Farm Aid.

The Alliance is proud to be working with the dozens of other national organizations the Grand Alliance coalition to fight the corporate interests seeking to dismantle this great public institution.

Arizona Alliance Board Member Wayne Burrow Receives Activist Award

Arizona Alliance board member **Wayne Burrow** received this year's [Arizona AFL-CIO retiree activist](#) award at the 4th Annual Labor Day Breakfast in Phoenix.

Mr. Burrow is a retired member of Operating Engineers Local 428. He is a passionate advocate for seniors and workers' rights, often participating in rallies, protests, and union strikes.



Wayne Burrow

“When we call him for help, he's there,” said **Tory Anderson**, Executive Director of the Arizona Alliance. “Wayne knows the true meaning of lifelong activism, and Arizona is lucky to have him.”