

# FRIDAY ALERT



**Alliance for Retired Americans**

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October 14, 2016

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## Alliance Hosts Tele-Town Halls with Senate Candidates Deborah Ross and Ann Kirkpatrick

On Tuesday, the Alliance held tele-town halls with Senate candidates **Deborah Ross** of North Carolina and Rep. **Ann Kirkpatrick** of Arizona.

Ms. Ross, a former state legislator, discussed Social Security, Medicare and prescription drug prices with almost 2,300 North Carolina Alliance members. Referring to her commitment to long term care and her own 98-year-old father-in-law, Ms. Ross spoke of the need to make sure all seniors “live as long as they can in the way that they can.”

On the call with nearly 1,200 Arizona Alliance members, Rep. Kirkpatrick spoke and took questions about a wide variety of retirement security and health care topics. She emphasized the need to calculate future Social Security cost-of-living adjustments based on the things on which seniors actually spend their money, by implementing the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly (CPI-E).

“We have the opportunity to replace two incumbents – Senators **Richard Burr** and **John McCain** - who have voted to do terrible things with the Social Security and Medicare programs we care deeply about,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance.

President Roach concluded, “For retirees, the choices in this election couldn’t be clearer. Both Rep. Kirkpatrick and Ms. Ross would represent an enormous improvement in their states over incumbent senators McCain and Burr, who have earned lifetime pro-retiree scores of 19% and 4%, respectively.”

## Nevada Seniors Host “Bake Sale” as they Demand Rep. Heck Protect Social Security from Cuts

On Wednesday, members of the Nevada Alliance held a bake sale and press conference at the Social Security Administration office in Reno, [covered by the local NBC affiliate](#), demanding that Rep. Joe Heck sign the pledge to protect Social Security.

For the third time in recent weeks, Nevada Alliance members urged Rep. Heck to fight on behalf of seniors. They stressed that without promises from politicians, future retirees may need to resort to bake sales to make ends meet.

“We have fought to assure a dignified retirement for hard working Americans,” said Nevada Alliance President **Thomas Bird**. “We are here to ask Rep. Heck: will he stand with us and pledge to protect our earned benefits, or will he stand against us?”



Nevada Alliance activists at the bake sale in Reno on Wednesday

Activists also held Social Security events recently in Missouri, Wisconsin, North Carolina, Florida, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.



Missouri activists demanded that Sen. Roy Blunt protect Social Security recently a press conference outside his office in Kansas City. A simultaneous event was held in St. Louis.

### Texas Alliance Takes on Pension Funding Gap

Last Thursday, the [Texas Alliance for Retired Americans](#) held a press conference outside Dallas City Hall to raise awareness about cuts to retiree benefits under Proposition One.

Proposition One is a bill targeted at City employees that will implement devastating cuts for both active workers and retirees. It will raise the retirement age from 60 to 65, decrease the cost-of-living adjustment cap from 5 to 3 percent, and eliminate a \$125 per month supplemental health benefit.

Furthermore, Proposition One will cut some survivor benefits and slash an average of \$4,500 from each retiree's annual benefit.

"Throughout the country, states are underfunding pensions by [\\$1.2 trillion](#)," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "Texas's Proposition One is just one example of a partially funded pension system that is leading politicians to try to renege on promises made to retirees. We cannot allow that to happen."

### **Some Medicare Beneficiaries Likely to See Premium Increases**

The *Morning Consult* recently reported that 30 percent of Medicare beneficiaries are [expected](#) to pay for all out-of-pocket cost increases under the program in 2017.

The Medicare Trustees' June report estimated that Medicare Part B premiums would rise by 22 percent and deductibles would increase from \$166 to \$204. The increases will affect 30 percent of Medicare beneficiaries not currently covered by the "hold harmless" provision.

The "hold harmless" clause does not cover low-income beneficiaries whose deductibles are paid by Medicaid, public sector retirees not receiving Social Security, new Medicare beneficiaries and high-income beneficiaries who already pay higher premiums.

The "hold harmless" provision states that premium increases cannot be larger than Social Security's cost-of-living adjustment or COLA, which is expected to be around 0.2 percent in 2017. However, Medicare Part B premiums must account for 25 percent of the program's costs, so without a legislative fix, beneficiaries not covered by the "hold harmless" clause will pay for the entire increase.

"Typically the COLA is much larger than premium increases, so small groups of Medicare beneficiaries are not made to shoulder the burden alone," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "Congress needs to address this soon or newly eligible beneficiaries, public sector retirees and those living on low and fixed incomes will face much higher costs."

### **It's Time to Get Your Flu Shot**

As flu season approaches, the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) has advised all seniors to get their flu shot before the end of October.

People 65 and older are a high risk of serious flu complications if they do not receive their vaccination. This year, the CDC has released two vaccines specifically designed with seniors in mind.

Further questions regarding your flu shot and locations near you can be found [here](#).