

# FRIDAY ALERT



**Alliance for Retired Americans**

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## Rep. Tom Price Selected as Secretary of Health and Human Services

On Tuesday, President-elect **Trump** named House Budget Committee Chairman **Tom Price** of Georgia to be Secretary of the U.S. Department of [Health and Human Services \(HHS\)](#). Rep. Price has spent years trying to privatize and cut Medicare and slash Medicaid.

Following the announcement, Rep. Price told reporters he plans to convert Medicare into a voucher system as early as the [fall of 2017](#), and Speaker **Paul Ryan** wants to move even more quickly than that. In the past, Price has promised to cut benefits and change Medicare into a voucher program, effectively ending guaranteed benefits and turning it into coupon-care. As secretary, Price will also have significant control over Medicare Part D and policies affecting the price of prescription drugs.



“The Alliance is deeply troubled by the nomination of Rep. Tom Price as secretary of HHS,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, “Rep. Price has made a career of attacking Medicare and has earned just a 4 percent lifetime score from the Alliance in the Congressional Voting Record. His views on privatizing Medicare and ending guaranteed health care benefits are out of touch with the needs and beliefs of American seniors.”

“The members of the Alliance will fight Trump, Price and House Speaker **Paul Ryan** every step of the way,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “We will not stand by and let a program that Americans have paid into for decades, which has provided health care to millions of seniors and saved families from bankruptcy, be destroyed.”

Learn more about the risks to Medicare from the Alliance's new [fact sheet](#).

## **Take Action: Sign the petition and visit your member of Congress this month**

We will be delivering petitions against turning Medicare's guaranteed benefits into a voucher program next week to Speaker Ryan and Senate Majority Leader **McConnell** – make sure your name is included by clicking [here](#).

Alliance members will be visiting their members of Congress in their home districts in December to demand that they support Medicare's guaranteed earned benefits and oppose vouchers. If you will participate, please sign up [here](#).

## **Trump's Social Security Point Man's Views on Privatization**

**Tom Leppert**, former mayor of Dallas, was named to the president-elect's transition ["landing team"](#) for the Social Security Administration (SSA) recently, raising serious concerns about the future of Social Security. In 2012, Mr. Leppert ran an unsuccessful Senate campaign in which he advocated for raising the retirement age and shifting Social Security toward private retirement accounts.

"Mr. Leppert is another example of Donald Trump surrounding himself with people who discredit his campaign promises," said Mr. Fiesta. "Throughout the campaign, President-elect Trump vowed to protect our hard earned Social Security benefits and avoid any cuts. Now, however, he has chosen someone as his Social Security point person who wants to slash Social Security."

## **The Carrier Agreement and the Future of American Workers**

Carrier Corp. announced on Tuesday evening that it had reached an agreement with the incoming administration to keep almost 800 jobs in Indiana. Carrier, which is owned by United Technologies (UTX), was planning on closing its factories that employ over 2,100 people and relocate to Mexico.

Details of the deal were released on Thursday and reveal that Indiana officials will give United Technologies \$7 million worth of tax breaks over 10 years. Sources close to the agreement say in addition to 800 jobs at the Indianapolis factory that were slated to move to Mexico, another 300 research and headquarter jobs that were not supposed to move are covered by the deal. Despite the agreement, 1,300 jobs are still relocating to Mexico.

"Saving American jobs is clearly a positive development," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "But we must remain vigilant and hold the president-elect accountable to all American workers. We cannot allow this deal to distract us from the larger issues facing American labor, including the protection of our pensions and health care benefits for active workers and retirees."

Pundits worry about the precedent set by the negotiation. Some fear companies will begin to hold American jobs hostage in order to gain tax incentives from the Trump administration.

## **Overtime Pay in Limbo**

Earlier this year, President **Obama** changed the rules surrounding overtime pay and guaranteed salaried workers time-and-a-half pay for their extra hours. All workers paid salaries below the designated threshold are entitled to time-and-a-half pay when they top 40 hours. The previous threshold was just \$23,660. The new one is \$47,476, or roughly double. This overhaul is

estimated to impact an additional 4.2 million workers, and that figure is set to increase with inflation.

After the reforms were rolled out, business groups sued to block them from going into effect. A federal judge in Texas blocked the White House's effort last week, and the Department of Justice filed a notice to [appeal](#) the preliminary injunction on behalf of the Department of Labor. Even if the Obama administration wins its appeal, the incoming Trump administration has already threatened to scrap the measure.

However, Trump ran a campaign that actively reached out to American workers who felt their voices were not heard in Washington. Ending increased overtime pay would undercut his message to workers and impact their livelihoods.

Paying workers for overtime also strengthens their retirement. The more money a worker earns the more benefits they will earn in retirement. It also strengthens the Social Security Trust Fund.

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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.