“Save our Medicare” Call-in Day to Capitol Hill Generates more than 14,000 Phone Calls

More than 14,000 people called their Senators and Congressmen Wednesday telling them not to dismantle or cut Medicare and Medicaid. The AFL-CIO, several of the Alliance’s participating unions, Working America and Social Security Works joined in the effort by sharing the call to action with their members and activists.

‘That’s a lot of calls and I know we made an impact,” said Robert Roach, Jr., President of the Alliance. “Our members are unified in our message. Do not let the GOP raise the Medicare eligibility age from 65 to 67. Do not replace our guaranteed benefits with a voucher. And reject schemes to shift more Medicare costs to seniors!”

“Medicaid is also critically important to seniors. It pays for the vast majority of long term care in this country and should not be cut,” he added

Some analysts anticipate a disagreement between the two chambers of Congress on Medicare reform. The GOP-led House, with its larger Republican majority, is in favor of drastically reforming Medicare. Speaker Paul Ryan and incoming HHS Secretary Tom Price have long favored turning Medicare’s guaranteed benefits into a voucher system.

A few Senate Republicans have suggested they are more hesitant to attempt Medicare reform, not wanting to “bite off more than they can chew.” It will be up to Alliance members and our allies to keep them from taking this dangerous step.

Poll Shows Voters Want Trump to be Kept “in Check” by Lawmakers

Support for the president-elect is severely limited following his victory in the 2016 election. A recent survey of Republican and battleground states commissioned by the Center for American Progress Action Fund found that 56 to 61% of voter respondents said Democratic lawmakers should act as “checks and balances” on the incoming president.

Large majorities in the survey opposed the next President’s and the new GOP-controlled Congress’s priorities. There was sky-high opposition to health-care cuts. Asked whether they would “replace Medicare with private insurance for seniors that costs two thousand dollars more per year on average,” 77 percent said no. Asked whether they would “cut funding for Medicaid, which states use to provide health coverage for low-income individuals and for nursing home care for seniors and the disabled,” 72 percent said no.

“Many voters who chose Trump in the election now want Democratic lawmakers to block or oppose significant parts of his agenda,” said Joseph Peters, Jr., Secretary-Treasurer of the
Alliance. “Grassroots campaigns like the Alliance’s Medicare Call-in day are more important than they've ever been.”

**Labor Victory at Staples, Inc.**

The U.S. Postal Service has agreed to halt an arrangement that allows private employees to provide postal services at Staples retail stores. The program that allowed USPS to place mini-post offices in Staples stores drew heavy criticism from the American Postal Workers Union as a privatization scheme. The Alliance was part of a broad coalition that fought the Staples program.

![Executive Director Fiesta at a 2015 rally with Postal Workers](image)

The Inspector General of the Post Office revealed that the Postal Service had lost revenue because of the program, and postal standards were not being met by the private employees. Additionally, the National Labor Relations Board ruled unanimously that the Postal Service violated federal labor law by refusing to provide the Postal Workers union with information on the program. An NLRB judge later ruled that the Postal Service failed to bargain with the union over the Staples program and recommended the arrangement cease.

“This is a significant victory for organized labor and all Americans who use the Postal Service,” said Richard Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance. “Through a united effort with many union allies, we demonstrated that Staples' involvement in our mail system led to inferior service and even security issues.”

**Developers of 401(k)s Regret Unintended Consequences of the Concept**

Monique Morrissey of the Economic Policy Institute writes that 401(k)s were never intended to replace pensions, so it should be no surprise that they aren’t up to the task. She notes that even the people who came up with the 401(k) concept now “lament the revolution they started,” to quote the Wall Street Journal’s Timothy W. Martin.
The vehicle designed to give individuals increased control over their own retirement savings has fallen short of its early backers’ rosy expectations. Longer life spans, high fees and stock-market declines have all contributed to the problem - and 401(k)s have proven to be a far inferior alternative to pensions for millions of workers.

"The Economic Policy Institute suggests expanding Social Security to help solve the problem," said President Roach. "I agree wholeheartedly - and we should also work to ensure that pensions remain a cornerstone of retirement income."

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.