

FRIDAY ALERT



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Millionaires Are Done Paying into Social Security for 2017

On Thursday all millionaires stopped paying into Social Security for 2017. Under current law, no one pays Social Security taxes on any income above \$127,200. Alliance Executive Director **Richard Fiesta** joined Senators **Bernie Sanders** (VT), **Elizabeth Warren** (MA) and **Ron Wyden** (OR) and Representatives **Peter DeFazio** (OR), **Jan Schakowsky** (IL) and **Paul Tonko** (D-NY) and allies at a Capitol Hill news conference to draw attention to this milestone. They highlighted the unfairness of a system that allows the wealthiest 1% to contribute a lower share of their annual income into Social Security than the rest of the population.

Sen. Sanders and Rep. DeFazio also announced the introduction of the Social Security Expansion Act, H.R. 1113 in the House, which protects and expands Social Security and eliminates the cap on payroll income above \$250,000. It also applies a 6.2% Social Security tax on investment income for high-income households. Social Security payroll taxes would not be paid on income between \$127,200 and \$250,000.



Sen. Sanders makes a point on Thursday as Executive Director Fiesta and others look on.

Earlier this week members of the ultra-conservative House Freedom Caucus [demanded](#) that the next House budget cut Social Security and Medicare. The Freedom Caucus has seen its influence grow, and caucus Chair **Mark Meadows** (R-NC) said he thinks President **Trump** will be open to “reform” of the programs as long as benefits for current beneficiaries are not diminished.

“The extremists in the House of Representatives still want to raise the retirement age beyond 67 and cut benefits for anyone who isn’t already retired,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “We think letting millionaires and billionaires pay their fair share makes a lot more sense.”

“Members of the far-right Freedom Caucus made it clear this week that they are coming for our earned Social Security benefits and they think President Trump is on their side,” said Mr. Fiesta. “The members of the Alliance will continue to push Congress to make the right choice and ensure a secure retirement for all Americans.”

Go to a Town Hall Meeting Near You Next Week While Congress is in Recess

Speaker **Paul Ryan** (R-WI) has announced that an Affordable Care Act repeal and replace bill will be introduced in the House the week after next, making this a great opportunity to get active in your community. The bill will include so-called premium support for Medicare recipients, which is a voucher scheme that will end Medicare’s guaranteed benefits. According to *The New York Times*, [the plan will also shift benefits](#) from the poor to the wealthy.

Please check out the [list](#) of Town Hall meetings while Congress is in recess next week and see if there is one near you to attend. If not, call your Representative and Senators at 202-224-3121 and voice your support for Medicare, Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act. A [fact sheet](#) and [talking points](#) are available on the Alliance website.

Controversy Abounds for Trump Cabinet Nominees but Mulvaney is confirmed

Fast food CEO **Andrew Puzder** was forced to withdraw from consideration for Secretary of Labor on Wednesday amid numerous controversies. Puzder’s personal and professional history were littered with [red flags](#) and worsened by a [lawsuit](#) against his company for wage fixing, further increasing cause to reject his nomination. He even failed to pay Social Security and Medicare withholding taxes for a domestic worker. *The National Review*, a conservative publication, also came out against his confirmation and [rumors](#) of as many as 12 potential Republican “No” votes emerged.

President Donald Trump announced on Thursday that **Alexander Acosta**, a former Justice Department official and current dean of Florida International University College of Law, is his new pick for labor secretary.

Mick Mulvaney, the president’s nominee to direct the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), also faced opposition from unexpected sources, as Sen. **John McCain** (R-AZ) said that he opposed Mulvaney’s confirmation. Like Rep. Meadows, Mulvaney has made statements about the need to “reform” Medicare and Social Security, including supporting or proposing privatization and raising the retirement age. These are in direct conflict with President Trump’s repeated promises not to cut Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. Mulvaney was confirmed by a [vote](#) of 51-49 on Thursday despite McCain’s opposition.

Secretary-Treasurer **Joseph Peters, Jr.** remarked, “We are pleased that Andrew Puzder, who represented a threat to the economic well-being and safety of millions of American workers, will not be put in charge of the Labor Department. But we continue to be troubled by cabinet nominees who do not reflect the president’s campaign promises to protect Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.”

Study Shows Voter ID Laws are Successful Only in Suppressing the Vote

A recent study [found](#) that the only success of strict Voter ID laws in 33 states has been in suppressing the vote. The requirements affect all voters, but minorities bear the brunt of the impact. Seniors also are heavily affected by these requirements and the burden has been likened to an unconstitutional poll tax. For people without a birth certificate, getting an acceptable photo can be quite difficult and often prevents them from voting.

Beyond those who can’t obtain an ID, even more voters are disenfranchised because they do not have the know-how, financial means, or the time to navigate the complicated and extensive process that frequently extends across state bureaucracies. Voter ID laws have frequently been challenged in court, on the basis that they are not only discriminatory but do not address a substantial issue, as [research](#) has shown that voter fraud is close to non-existent.

“These Voter ID laws prevent people from exercising a fundamental right,” said President Roach. “We are hopeful that the increasing evidence regarding their impact will lead to their reversals. We support efforts to make it easier, not harder to vote.”