

FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

815 16th Street, NW, Fourth Floor • Washington, DC 20006 • 202.637.5399

www.retiredamericans.org • aracommunications@retiredamericans.org

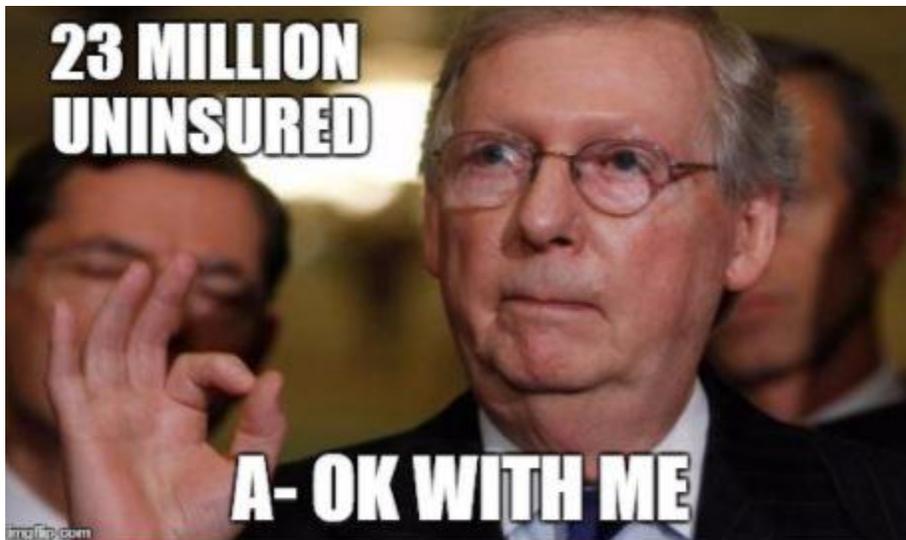
Spanish version: www.alianzadejubilados.org

June 16, 2017

Senate Keeps Health Care Plan Out of Public View

Senate Republican leaders are pushing ahead with plans to pass a revised version of the House GOP health care bill despite public opposition. [Polling](#) released this week showed that a majority opposes the plan in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Last week, Majority Leader **Mitch McConnell** invoked “Rule 14” on the bill. This puts the Republican plan, named the American Health Care Act (AHCA), on a fast track to passage, and there will be no public hearings. Senate leadership have also said they will not release a draft of the bill to the public until the Congressional Budget Office scores it. The bill is expected to be introduced as soon as June 26, with a vote on it occurring only two days later.



Majority Leader McConnell

With health care experts, providers, and the general public having no insight into the bill, it can be assumed that the bill will closely follow the House-passed bill, which even **President Trump** himself called “[too mean](#),” despite the fact that he celebrated its passage only 6 weeks ago with Speaker **Paul Ryan** and Republican members at the White House.

Senators **Rob Portman** (OH) and **Shelley Moore Capito** (WV) have [proposed](#) a 7-year phase-out of Medicaid expansion to try to win over support from Republican moderates in the Senate. Both Senators’ states have benefitted immensely from the expansion program, with over 863,000 individuals gaining coverage in those two states alone. Their proposal will still result in millions of Americans losing health care coverage, only at a somewhat slower rate.

“The AHCA represents a fundamental danger to working people and retirees,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “Senate leaders may want to keep it a secret, but that means we must be twice as loud in our opposition.”

The Alliance will be holding a national call-in day on June 22, and local Alliances are planning events to demonstrate grass roots opposition.

“We encourage all of our members and all those concerned with health care to call their Senators, write to their local newspapers, and encourage their friends and neighbors to do the same,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance.

Join the National Call-in Day to Save Senior Health Care

Thousands of seniors will call their senators on Thursday, June 22 as part of a day of unified resistance and opposition to the GOP’s plan to decimate our health care system.

[Click here to RSVP for the National Call-in Day.](#) We will send you a reminder message on the day of action with talking points.

Americans over the age of 50 will be hurt the most if this bill passes. Insurance companies will be able to charge older customers more than five times more in premiums for the same policies. It decimates Medicaid, the program that pays for the nursing home care of millions of seniors and provides health insurance for people with disabilities, with more than \$800 billion in cuts. It shortens the solvency of the Medicare Trust Fund by two years to provide tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans.

“Please make the call – **1-866-828-4162** – and share this message with your family and friends and ask them to do the same,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance.

Supreme Court Likely to Hear a Key AFSCME Case, with Extremely High Stakes for Unions

Last April, the U.S. Supreme Court split 4-4 on a legal challenge to public service workers’ ability to organize and negotiate for their wages and benefits. The split affirmed the previous unanimous decision by the Supreme Court and a lower-court ruling that allows public service unions to collect agency fees or fair share fees from non-members for their work on their behalf.

Last week, a new case raising the same legal question reached the court, which is now back at nine justices following the appointment of Justice **Neil Gorsuch**.

Since it only takes four justices to grant cases a hearing, the pro-corporate justices will probably agree to hear it, according to [The New York Times](#).

The new case, Janus v. American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), will shine a spotlight on Justice Gorsuch, who now holds the decisive vote on this momentous question about the future of public service working people’s freedom to negotiate for a fair return on their work.

The case concerns **Mark Janus**, a state government worker in Illinois who is represented by AFSCME. He sued the union, saying he should not pay fair share fees to support its work representing him.

Should Justice Gorsuch vote with the court's conservative members, millions of public service workers such as teachers, firefighters and police in more than 20 states could be allowed to opt out of paying for collective bargaining, weakening workers' voice in the workplace. To do so, the Court would have to overrule a 40-year-old precedent, *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*.

AFSCME President **Lee Saunders** describes the Janus case as an assault on the labor movement.

"The corporate C.E.O.s behind this case want to take away the freedom of working people to join together in a strong union and negotiate a fair return on their work," said President Saunders. "The rich and powerful interests behind this case are asking the Supreme Court to further rig the rules against working people and deny them the freedom to join together in a strong union to provide for their families, protect their communities and lift up the concerns of all working families."

"Last year's decision in **Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association** left standing the sound, settled labor law that protects working people," added President Roach. "And seniors know that when you are compensated more fairly during your working years, you can earn better retirement security."

Idaho Alliance Holds State Convention

The Idaho Alliance for Retired Americans held its convention this past week. **Julie Wilhelm** from the Senior Health Insurance Benefits Advisers gave a presentation on the complexities of Medicare to attendees. Alliance Regional Vice President **Steve Kofahl** gave the keynote speech at the conference, detailing the threats that the AHCA poses to seniors, including block-granting Medicaid and weakening funding for Medicare. Steve also spoke of the growing number of Alliance members, and the need for all 4.4 million members to stand up for seniors' rights.

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.