

FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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2016 Alliance Voting Record Released – See How Your Elected Officials Scored

This week, the Alliance released its annual Voting Record for Congress. The [report](#) scored every U.S. Representative and Senator on issues affecting current and future retirees.

Key issues in the report include attacks on core retiree programs like Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid; health care policy, including repealing the individual and employer mandates and the Medicaid expansion; and tax issues, including breaks for higher income Americans while increasing taxes for lower-income and middle class families.

“Senate leadership including Majority Leader **Mitch McConnell** (KY), Majority Whip **John Cornyn** (TX), Finance Chairman **Orrin Hatch** (UT) and Budget Committee Chairman **Mike Enzi** (WY) together took 40 votes on senior issues. Only two of those votes could be considered pro-retiree,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance.

“Among the House of Representatives leadership — including Speaker **Paul Ryan** (WI), Majority Leader **Kevin McCarthy** (CA), and Majority Whip **Steve Scalise** (LA) — none cast even a single pro-retiree vote,” he added. “We clearly need changes in our leadership in Washington.”

Take Action to Stop Senate Republicans from Gutting Health Care

Behind closed doors a dozen Republican Senators are meeting to decide what will happen with our health care. They have held no public hearings to allow the public to see what they are doing.

[We must fight back. Please click to sign our petition urging them to stop, before it's too late.](#)

Every public opinion poll shows that the American people strongly disapprove of this plan. Nonpartisan policy experts and the Congressional Budget Office confirm that it will strip coverage from millions of Americans and cause premiums to increase. Doctors, nurses and patient advocates all agree working Americans will pay more money for less care.

Why are they doing this? Because the Republican leadership is obsessed with cutting taxes for the wealthiest Americans and big corporations.

They are making a choice – to put the interests of the millionaires and billionaires ahead of working American families.

[We can't let them do this. Please make sure your name is recorded in opposition to this proposal.](#)

The GOP plans are dangerous to retirees and working people. The Senate starting point is the **Paul Ryan** bill that will take away health care from 23 million Americans, including more than 5 million people between the ages of 50 and 64. The plan will cause insurance premiums for millions more to skyrocket, particularly older Americans. It also weakens the Medicare Trust Fund, and cuts nearly \$1 trillion from Medicaid, which pays for long-term care for millions of elderly Americans with nowhere else to turn.

Make sure your voice is heard. [Please sign the petition today](#) and look for more opportunities to speak out.

Nursing Home Residents' Rights Would be weakened by Trump Administration Action

An **Obama**-era policy to increase the rights of nursing home residents could be in danger, as the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced a proposal to reverse the previous administration's position. In 2016, the Obama Administration banned federal funding from going to any nursing home that forced residents or their families to sign an arbitration agreement before the residents began their stay. On Monday, the **Trump** Administration's CMS [announced](#) its plan to remove this ban.

"Eliminating the federal ban on arbitration agreements diminishes the rights of residents and their families to use the power of the law when their treatment has been inadequate or even harmful," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "Forcing residents into arbitration to settle their disputes gives an unfair advantage to these companies, and will further harm older Americans who are being abused and neglected."

Nursing home companies claim that arbitration is a faster, and therefore cheaper option to settle disputes, but some residents and their families claim that the agreements they sign are unclear and that they were unaware of what they were signing.

According to the [Centers for Disease Control](#), in 2014 there were 1.4 million Americans living in 15,600 nursing homes, almost 70% of which are for profit.

President Obama's Fiduciary Rule on Investment Advice to be Implemented – For Now

While the past five months of the Trump Administration have been filled with many attempts to reverse Obama era policies, the Department of Labor is set to go ahead with a [rule](#) created by the Obama Administration. Under the fiduciary rule, professionals who are hired for retirement advice are required to offer recommendations that are in the best interest of their clients, not of their firm or themselves. Before this rule, such professionals simply had to provide advice that was "suitable" to their clients.

R. Alexander Acosta, the Secretary of the Department of Labor, testified before the U.S. House Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Wednesday that the fiduciary rule will go into effect on June 9. However, Secretary Acosta said he is still gathering more information about the rule and could reverse it later.

"Requiring financial advisers to have a 'fiduciary' duty to their clients means that American workers and retirees can be more confident that the advice they receive is in their own best interest, not their financial adviser's," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "The Trump Administration must not tamper with this rule once it is implemented."



Secretary Acosta

Without the fiduciary rule, financial professionals were free to drive up commissions and to steer clients to products that had higher fees and lower returns when they were advising them. The White House Council of Economic Advisers [estimated](#) that such conflicts of interest cost American families \$17 billion each year.

Florida Alliance Hosts Annual Conference in Orlando

Tallahassee Mayor **Andrew Gillum** and Executive Director Fiesta spoke to approximately 60 attendees at the Florida Alliance's annual Executive Board Meeting in Orlando Tuesday and Wednesday. FLARA President Emeritus **Tony Fransetta** personally presented Recording Secretary **Barbara DeVane** and **Steve Protulis**, Executive Director of the Elderly Housing Development and Operations Corp. (EHDOC), with the Tony Fransetta Award in honor of their service to the Florida Alliance and Florida's seniors.

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.