

# FRIDAY ALERT



## Alliance for Retired Americans

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## Graham-Cassidy Health Care Tax on Older Americans Fails to Advance in the Senate

Senate Republicans announced that they will not vote this week on their latest proposal to dismantle the Affordable Care Act. The bill, sponsored by Senators **Lindsey Graham** (R-SC) and **Bill Cassidy** (R-LA), would have placed an age tax on older Americans, eliminated protections for people with pre-existing conditions and resulted in at least 32 million Americans losing affordable health care.

It was the party's last hope ahead of a September 30 deadline, when Senate rules change and Republicans will need more than 50 votes to pass health care legislation connected to the 2017 budget resolution.

Senator Susan Collins (ME) was the third Republican to come out in opposition to the Graham-Cassidy bill. She joined Senators **John McCain** (AZ) and **Rand Paul** (KY) of Kentucky as the three Republicans blocking the bill's passage. Without their votes, the Republican majority Senate only had 49 votes for the bill.

“Thank you to all of the Alliance members who made phone calls and took action locally to prevent this bill from moving forward,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “We can breathe a sigh of relief for the moment. However, we must remain ready to speak out against additional threats to our health care, because they are likely to return.”



Judy Bryant, Texas Field Organizer, and Texas Alliance members rallied in front of Sen. John Cornyn's office on Monday to stop the Graham-Cassidy bill.

“Fortunately, enough Senators recognized the ramifications of a dangerous bill and a warped legislative process, preventing Senate Majority Leader **Mitch McConnell** from moving forward with his cruel plans,” added **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance in a [statement](#). “Sen. McConnell and Vice President Pence have already promised to try to repeal the Affordable Care Act again, instead of working in a bipartisan manner to improve health care for all.”

## **GOP Tax Cut Plan Could be another Way to Cut Medicare and Medicaid**

President **Trump** and House Speaker **Paul Ryan** released the outlines of a new tax plan Thursday that would cut taxes the most for people making more than \$400,000 a year and increase tax rates for lower- and middle class working families. Republican leaders want to raise the lowest individual tax rate from 10 to 12 percent and double the standard deduction, which they intend to market as a tax cut that will benefit working Americans and families.

The plan also calls for eliminating the current deduction for payment of state and local taxes, which would hit taxpayers in all states but hit hardest in states that have an income tax or higher taxes, such as California, New Jersey and New York. The home mortgage interest deduction would only be available to taxpayers who pay more than \$25,000 in interest per year, eliminating it for millions of working families.

“Don’t believe anyone who tells you that this is tax relief for the middle class,” said President Roach. “It is another plan to transfer of wealth to those who need it least. And we need to make sure the GOP doesn’t try to pay for it by weakening Medicare and Medicaid, because they have already shown a strong desire to do that with their proposed budget.”

“Older Americans will not be fooled by this attempt to provide a massive tax cut for large corporations and wealthy individuals on the backs of working Americans and retirees,” [said](#) Executive Director Fiesta of the so-called “tax reform” plan.

## **Bipartisan Medicare Bill Passes Senate, Expanding Home Care**

The Senate passed a bipartisan Medicare reform bill on Tuesday, expanding an Obamacare program for senior home care. The Creating High-Quality Results and Outcomes Necessary to Improve Chronic (CHRONIC) Care Act of 2017 expands a program that provides care for seniors in their homes and gives new tools to groups of doctors that come together to coordinate care for a patient, known as Accountable Care Organizations. It also expands the use of telehealth, which enables doctors to use technology to communicate with patients who are far away.

Sen. **Ron Wyden** (D-OR) was instrumental in passing the [bill](#), which was originally introduced in April by Sen. **Orrin Hatch** (R-UT).

“This legislation will allow more seniors to get care in their own home, which may lead to better outcomes,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance.

## **State Alliances in Illinois and California Hold Annual Conventions**

The Illinois Alliance held their convention on Saturday in Ottawa, IL, re-electing **Homer Spaulding**, UAW Region 4, as Executive Vice President and **Katie Jordan**, Workers United, as Treasurer. New members to the board include: **Thomassean Milhouse** of AFSCME, **Jacki Naughton** of the Illinois Federation of Teachers, **Scott Marshall** of SOAR and **Mike Malmstrom** of the Quad Cities ARA. **Maureen Dunn**, Field Manager, spoke on behalf of the national Alliance.



The new board members of the Illinois Alliance at swearing-in

In Sacramento on Tuesday and Wednesday, the California Alliance (CARA) held its 14th annual convention, with over 280 delegates and visitors participating in the activities. The event started with welcomes by both national Alliance Executive Director Fiesta and **Fabrizio Sasso**, Executive Director of the Sacramento CLC. The luncheon keynote speaker was **Tom Steyer** from NextGen, who shared some of his work to register and engage voters for the upcoming elections and urged CARA members to continue their activism.

CARA's board terms are staggered. This year, CARA President **Nan Brasmer** and Secretary **Dawn Bronsema** were re-elected. Twelve labor-appointed vice president positions and eight community-based vice presidents were installed for 4-year terms. For pictures of the activities and some of the Power Point presentations, go to the [CARA website](#).

### **Obituary: Dick Collins, Former Nevada Alliance Vice President**

It is with great sadness that the Nevada Alliance (NARA) announced the passing of past board Vice President **Dick Collins** on Sunday, September 24, 2017. Dick was a lifelong union activist from New York who served on the New York State Democratic Committee and numerous campaigns. He moved to Nevada upon his retirement in 2005, later serving on both the Clark

County and Nevada Democratic Committees. He leaves behind two daughters and five granddaughters.

“He will be greatly missed by his family, many friends, and gobs of grassroots activists,” said **Thomas Bird**, President of the Nevada Alliance. “Rest in peace, you did a great job. We will try and live up to your expectations.”

NARA had earlier paid [tribute](#) to Dick with the renaming of the Las Vegas chapter in his honor.

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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.