

FRIDAY ALERT



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Texas Alliance Helps with Hurricane Harvey Relief as Irma Makes its Way to Florida

As the state of Florida awaits the arrival of Hurricane Irma, the Texas Alliance (TARA) has been leading the Alliance's efforts to pitch in on Gulf Coast disaster relief. The Alliance encourages that donations be made to the [Texas Worker Relief Fund](#).

The Gulf region's senior and disabled residents were [especially devastated](#) when Hurricane Harvey struck. Many were trapped in nursing homes or senior living centers, without access to necessary medicines and care as the waters rose around them.

North Texas TARA members participated in two major Labor Day events, with the Dallas AFL-CIO Breakfast alone raising \$50,000 for disaster relief.



TARA table at Dallas Labor Day Breakfast

“Reports from Beaumont, Corpus Christi, and Houston indicate that our activists are staying dry and throwing themselves into helping everybody else,” said Texas Alliance President **Gene Lantz**.

Reverend **Harmon Dent**, Golden Triangle Chapter President, was asked if he wanted to get away from the floods in Beaumont by visiting Dallas. He replied, "Thank you very much for the offer, but I'm needed here."

His home and church were spared from flooding. His church was used for bottled water distribution, and he used a church van to transport people.

"Several churches flooded, and the pastors and some members will worship with us," Rev. Dent added.

Houston Chapter President **Cheryl Anderson** is also working long hours to help disaster victims after coping with 50 inches of rain. The Houston Alliance chapter's cleanup efforts are now well under way.

Zeph Capo, President of Houston Federation of Teachers, said that her group is also helping with cleanup efforts and cleaning supplies. President Anderson and others are working out of the offices of the Houston Federation of Teachers' hall. Other union brothers and sisters have shown special concern for the retirees. Many Houstonians have lost their vehicles.

"What those affected need most is cash," emphasized **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the national Alliance. "Unfortunately, Floridians will likely have the same needs that Gulf states are already experiencing."

President Roach reiterated the request that Gulf Coast Disaster Relief donations go to the Texas Workers Relief Fund, a 501(c)(3) charitable fund overseen by the Texas AFL-CIO, which has been established to assist workers and their families in their time of need. Funds are provided to help stabilize situations when issues occur such as natural disasters and contributions are tax deductible.

McCain Backs Graham-Cassidy Affordable Care Act Repeal Legislation

Sen. **John McCain** (R-AZ) told reporters that he supports the [bill](#) for repealing Obamacare from GOP Sens. **Lindsey Graham** (SC) and **Bill Cassidy** (LA). If passed, the bill would block-grant Obamacare spending and lead to significant cuts, particularly for Medicaid. The bill would turn control of Medicaid to states and cap what the federal government spends on it each year.

The announcement was significant because McCain was one of three crucial Republican votes that killed the GOP repeal effort in July.

"Like a bad penny, the GOP's efforts to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act keep coming back," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "We will oppose the latest incarnation like we opposed previous attempts. This is just another way to keep Medicaid from covering health care costs for seniors and people with disabilities, in addition to long-term care for most of the 1.4 million people in nursing homes."

Ending DACA Weakens the Social Security and Medicare Trust Funds

President **Trump's** decision to stop allowing young unauthorized immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children to apply for deferred deportation and receive work permits would cost the country billions of dollars, according to a [report](#) by the Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC).

ILCA's report, issued last December, showed that ending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program could reduce Social Security and Medicare tax contributions by DACA employees and employers by \$24.6 billion over a decade.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has granted DACA benefits to more than 740,000 individuals. The program helped broaden the payroll tax base, dramatically increasing Social Security and Medicare contributions in the process.

Trump's policy would reduce Social Security contributions by \$19.9 billion, while Medicare contributions would be lowered by \$4.6 billion. Ending DACA would damage the financial health of the Social Security and Medicare trust funds for everyone.

“Continuing the DACA program or creating a path to citizenship for these immigrants would be the right thing for immigrants and non-immigrants alike,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “It would be a win-win for everyone in America. I would think someone who is known by many of his supporters as a great dealmaker would want that.”

GOP Considers Changes to 401(k) Plans to Provide Lower Taxes for Corporations

In their quest to produce tax cuts for wealthy Americans and corporations, House Republicans are considering [taxing](#) 401(k) contributions up front, instead of when money is withdrawn from the plan during retirement. This could endanger workers' ability to save effectively for retirement.

The idea would take away billions of dollars from future retirees by removing the deduction that 401(k) savers get. The proposal lifts \$18,000 off the top of their salary before income taxes kick in 20, 30 or 40 years later.