

# FRIDAY ALERT



**Alliance for Retired Americans**

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Spanish version: [www.alianzadejubilados.org](http://www.alianzadejubilados.org)

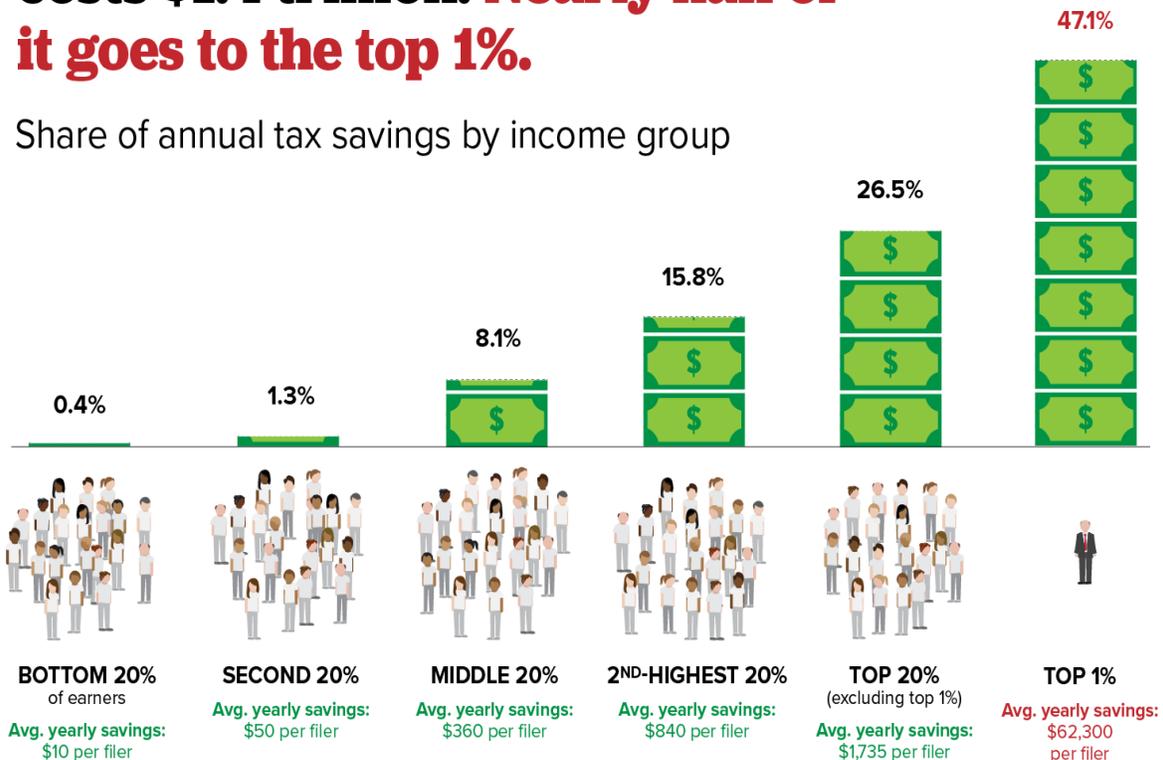
## House of Representatives Votes to Have Seniors Subsidize the Wealthiest 1%

The U.S. House approved a plan to provide tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans and corporations on Thursday by a vote of [227-205](#). If H.R. 1, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, becomes law, the deficit will explode by more than \$1.4 trillion and automatic spending cuts will kick in. For starters, there will be a \$25 billion cut from Medicare, and more from Medicaid. In addition, eliminating the medical expense deduction will make it harder for families with high medical expenses, many of whom are seniors, to make ends meet.

“This is clearly a return to the trickle-down economics that failed,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “Make no mistake, retirees will remember this when they vote in 2018.”

## The House Republican tax plan costs \$1.4 trillion. Nearly half of it goes to the top 1%.

Share of annual tax savings by income group



\$1.4 trillion figure accounts for total 10-year net cost of tax plan. All other figures are for 2027.

Source: *Preliminary Distributional Analysis of the "Tax Cuts and Jobs Act"*, Tax Policy Center, November 8, 2017.

**Economic Policy Institute**

On Tuesday, Republican members of the Senate Finance Committee used their version of the tax bill to repeal the individual mandate to purchase health insurance. The move is likely to have a devastating effect on Americans between the ages of 50 and 64, since allowing some people to opt out of insurance coverage will leave 13 million others without coverage. Furthermore, the cost of health insurance premiums will skyrocket for those who stay in the market. This is especially true for 50-64 year-olds, who often need health coverage the most.

Congress' Joint Committee on Taxation says that within ten years, the Senate bill will raise income taxes on every family making between \$10,000 and \$75,000 per year, while giving large tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans.

**To demand that the GOP tax plan goes no further, call your Representative and Senators at 866-828-4162 and tell them to reject the outrageous tax bill.**

The Senate is expected to vote on its bill after the Thanksgiving holiday, and President **Trump** is pressing the House and Senate to approve a final bill before Christmas.

### **Chained CPI is hidden in the Republican Tax Plan**

Republicans have also resurrected the [chained CPI](#), which is hidden in the House tax bill. In 2013, many in Congress were seriously considering cutting Social Security benefits by tying the COLA to the Chained CPI, since it is a smaller measure of inflation. This change would have caused significant lifetime losses in benefits for the average Social Security beneficiary – \$6,000 over 15 years for the average retiree at the time.

The new iteration of the chained CPI would increase taxes, since tax brackets are calculated annually based on the inflation rate. It would push more salaries into higher tax brackets, a phenomenon called “bracket creeping.” Workers could end up worse off than they were before getting a pay increase.

“The re-introduction of chained CPI into the Republican tax bill is another insult on top of all the other injuries,” said President Roach. “It is one more brazen attempt to harm seniors and the middle class.”

### **Paul Ryan: Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid are Next**

According to *The New York Times*, “Republican lawmakers have repeatedly dismissed concerns about how they planned to pay for their \$1.5 trillion tax cut, as well as how the tax rewrite would add to the federal deficit.”

Many Democrats are [concerned](#) – for good reason - that the GOP will turn to cutting Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid to finance their tax cuts. At a town hall style event in Virginia on Tuesday, House Speaker **Paul Ryan** said that the most important steps to reducing the national debt were to spur economic growth and make changes to what he called “entitlement programs.”

“Slashing Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid violates the trust of millions of seniors who rely on these programs to support their day-to-day lives,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “Causing that to occur so that the wealthiest 1% can have more tax cuts is particularly egregious.”

## Retirees Troubled by Choice of Alex Azar to Lead Health and Human Services

President Trump's pick to lead the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), **Alex Azar**, is causing deep concern among retirees and health care advocates, [who are skeptical of his intentions](#). Azar served as deputy HHS secretary under President **George W. Bush** and then went on to serve as a top executive for big pharma companies, including Eli Lilly's U.S. division. Mr. Azar has repeatedly opposed measures to limit drug companies' profiteering and curtail improper marketing, and he also favors weakening drug safety standards.

"Prescription drug costs are the top driver behind high medical costs in this country, hurting retirees and all consumers," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "By nominating a drug corporation insider to lead the Department of Health and Human Services, President Trump appears to be putting a fox in charge of the henhouse."

There is widespread worry that Trump has selected Azar to help him dismantle Obamacare, despite it remaining the law of the land. Azar has supported turning Medicaid authority over to the states, which would likely lead to massive cuts to the program.

### Obituary: Alliance Colleague and Friend Adam Swope, 38

[Adam Swope](#), the Alliance's Pennsylvania field organizer from 2008 to 2015, died tragically in a traffic accident this past Saturday afternoon, November 11, in Chester County, Pennsylvania.

"Adam was a terrific colleague and even better friend," said Executive Director Fiesta. "He had a first rate strategic mind coupled with a positive outlook that he brought to work and life everyday. He was instrumental in growing the Pennsylvania Alliance into a grassroots statewide organization that had retiree volunteers advocating for our issues throughout the state."



Adam Swope (photo from *Daily Local News*, Chester County, PA)

"Many Alliance members from beyond Pennsylvania will remember Adam from our national meetings and conferences," he continued. "We were fortunate that Adam remained part of the Alliance family as a Pennsylvania Alliance board member."

Adam was active in his home Chester County community and was the principal staff member to Chester County's Democratic commissioner. He was a key architect of historic election results, including last week when the Democrats swept Chester County elections for the first time in the 300-year history of the county.

Memorial Services will be held at the Reading Country Club, 5311 Perkiomen Avenue (Route 422), Reading, Pennsylvania 19606 on Saturday, November 18, 2017, at 3 p.m. A visitation will be held from 1 to 3 p.m. at the funeral home. Online condolences may be made at [www.kuhnfuneralhomes.com](http://www.kuhnfuneralhomes.com).

### **Pennsylvania Alliance Board Member, Colorado Alliance Ally win their Local Elections**

Pennsylvania Alliance board member **Laura Wentz** and friend of the Alliance **Sherry Goodman** won their local elections on November 7. Ms. Wentz, a member of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) Local 8 and President of the Philadelphia Coalition of Labor Union Women, was elected to the Upper Darby Township Council.

**Sherry Goodman**, wife of Alliance Regional Board Member **Mack Goodman**, won her race to represent the city of Thornton's Ward 1 in Colorado, gaining 39.5% of the vote in a race against three opponents.

### **Have you Completed Your Medicare Checkup? Open enrollment ends December 7**

Medicare's annual open enrollment season ends December 7. It's the perfect time to do a "Medicare Check-up" and confirm that you are in the right Medicare insurance plan for your situation. Union Plus is pleased to offer the Union Plus Retiree Health Insurance Program to help Alliance members with their Medicare needs. This is a free service and there is no obligation to change your plan or enroll.

Learn about the coverage options available to you, including ways to potentially save money on your future out-of-pocket health care expenses. To speak to a licensed insurance agent at eHealth, an insurance broker specializing in the Medicare insurance plan needs of Alliance members, call 1-888-898-5304 (TTY users: 771) Monday - Friday between 8am - 8pm EST or visit [UnionPlusMedicare.com](http://UnionPlusMedicare.com).

### **Alaska Alliance Chapter Holds its Founding Convention**

The Alaska Alliance held its founding convention on Thursday in Anchorage. **Dale Chubin** from Alaska AFSCME Retiree Chapter 52 was elected state president.

"We are extremely pleased to welcome Alaska as our 36th state chapter," said President Roach. "Congratulations to Dale and thank you to the Alaska AFL-CIO for their help in making this possible."

*The Alliance wishes everyone a safe and happy Thanksgiving. The Friday Alert will return on December 1, 2017.*