

# FRIDAY ALERT



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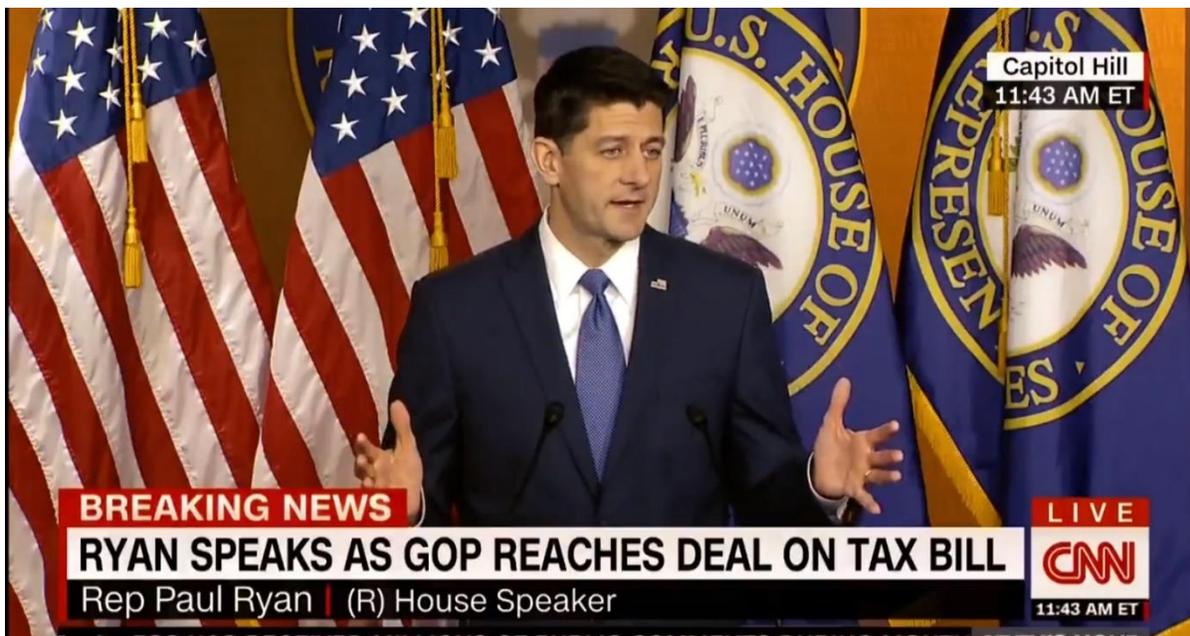
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## Republicans Reach Deal on Tax Scam Bill, Still Plan to Target “Entitlements”

House and Senate Republicans reached an agreement to combine Senate and House versions of their tax bill on Wednesday. As of Friday they had not released the bill to the public, but the outline shows the [combined plan](#) is just as bad for older Americans as previous versions while giving even more tax breaks to the wealthiest 1% of Americans. It will repeal the Affordable Care Act’s individual mandate, causing millions to lose their health insurance, and sets the stage for a Republican assault on Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security by adding at least \$1.5 trillion to the deficit.

House Speaker **Paul Ryan** has [reiterated that](#) he intends to go after “entitlements” in 2018 admitting that the bill is a stepping stone for taking aim at earned benefits.



House Speaker Paul Ryan discusses the tax bill agreement on CNN.

Within the past week, a slew of [other lawmakers have indicated](#) they agreed with cutting earned benefits or were open to the idea including Sens. **John Thune** (R-SD), **Roy Blunt** (R-MO.), **Bob Corker** (R-TN), **Ron Johnson** (R-WI), and **Lamar Alexander** (R-TN), and House Ways and Means Committee Chair **Kevin Brady** (R-TX). Sen. **Jeff Flake** (R-AZ) even brought up chained CPI when voicing his support.

“It is astounding that Republicans think they can give corporations and wealthy Americans a big payout by being fiscally irresponsible and turn around and rob retirees of their healthcare and the retirement benefits they have paid for through a lifetime of work.” said **Richard Fiesta**, Alliance executive director. “We must fight to make sure they don’t get away with this.”

The Senate intends to vote on the new plan Monday and send it to the House on Tuesday. If passed, changes to the tax code will take effect January 1.

### Alliance Participates in #NotOnePenny Rally at the Capitol Building with Democratic Leadership

Despite frigid temperatures on Wednesday, Alliance members and hundreds of other activists showed up at the Capitol to protest the GOP tax plan -- which threatens funding for Medicare and Medicaid while giving massive tax breaks to the richest Americans.



Protesters hold up a “Medicare going out of business sale” sign and an Alliance t-shirt at the #NonOnePenny rally.

Organizers called on the Senate to delay the final vote until Alabama Senator-elect Doug Jones takes his seat, chanting “No Jones, No vote.” They were joined by House Democratic Leader **Nancy Pelosi**, Sen. **Bernie Sanders** (D-VT), Sen. **Elizabeth Warren** (D-MA), Sen. **Ron Wyden** (D-OR) and many others. “It’s immoral, It’s wrong, and it must be defeated,” remarked Pelosi.

Families and individuals who would be directly affected by the tax plan spoke as well, citing the ways in which programs at risk, like Medicaid, keep them alive. Such events have been ongoing for the past several months and have cultivated over 1.2 million calls to congress.

“The only way that we can defeat this monstrous tax plan is through activism,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, president of the Alliance. “We must keep calling our lawmakers, attending rallies, and making our voices heard until this bill is dead and remember how each member and Senator voted next November.”

## **Call Your Representative today to Protest Alex Azar's appointment to lead the Department of Health and Human Services**

Former international pharmaceutical corporation executive Alex Azar is a dangerous pick for Secretary of Health and Human Services. [Azar has](#) a record of advocating for the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, and for a disastrous change in Medicaid Policy.

Not only does he strictly oppose expansion programs, but Alex Azar [wants to](#) transform Medicaid funding into block grants, which would ultimately require states to significantly cut their Medicaid budget.

During his tenure at Eli Lilly Pharmaceuticals, Mr. Azar [tripled the price of insulin](#), which left diabetics no choice but to self-ration, starve themselves in hopes of managing blood sugar, and even to experience kidney failure. This year alone, 25% of Americans aged 55 to 64 reported not filling a prescription because of cost.

***Please call 202-224-3121 to be connected with your senators and tell them you oppose putting a pharmaceutical executive who wants to eliminate health care for millions.***

### **NIH: Older Americans May Be Taking Too Many Medications**

The number of seniors taking multiple -- and often unnecessary -- drugs has spiked, according to [an analysis](#) by *Kaiser Health News*. National Institutes of Health researchers [suggest](#) that a quarter of people aged 65 to 69 and more than 40 percent of those aged 70 to 79 are taking at least five prescription drugs.

This phenomenon, called polypharmacy, has spiraled out of control for a number of reasons. In general, medications have gained a larger presence in society since 2000. The side effects of drugs, especially for older Americans, are sometimes misinterpreted by doctors as new conditions that require a new prescription. Seniors already taking medications might also have more added to their regimen after being discharged from the hospital.

Physicians are working to stop the outsized influence that medications currently have on seniors by "deprescribing" items that are duplicative or unnecessary. A lack of research about how to safely approach deprescribing and a reluctance to override previous prescriptions have made it more difficult to implement on a large scale. But doctors are gaining ground in adopting the process as standard procedure for senior care.

"It's difficult for older Americans to have fulfilling lives when they're taking upwards of five powerful, and sometimes unnecessary medications," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, secretary-treasurer for the Alliance. "We must do everything we can to correct this situation so seniors can have the best quality of life possible."

### **Wisconsin Alliance Hosts 2018 Gubernatorial Candidate Forum**

On Monday, the Wisconsin Alliance hosted a forum where candidates running for governor could introduce themselves and their message to voters. Over 250 people showed up to the Eau Claire event, and many more tuned in via [livestream](#), to hear the candidates speak on pressing state issues - ranging from private sector retirement programs to student loans. The issues of economic growth and jobs in Wisconsin were also discussed. The following candidates participated:

- Matt Flynn (D)
- Tony Evers (D)
- Kelda Roys (D)
- Andy Gronik (D)
- Bob Harlow (D)
- Mike McCabe (D)
- Michele Doolan (D)
- Dana Wachs (D)
- Mahlon Mitchell (D)
- Jeff Rumbaugh (D)
- Ryan Cason (R)
- Dave Heaster (D)

Governor Walker was invited, but did not attend.