

FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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Kavanaugh on the Supreme Court Could be Major Blow to Affordable Health Care

In choosing **Brett Kavanaugh** to replace retiring Justice **Anthony Kennedy** on the U.S. Supreme Court Monday, the president has selected someone with a long history of ruling against [working families](#), older employees, and access to affordable health care. Kavanaugh, who was appointed by former president **George W. Bush** to the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals, was chosen from a short list of possible candidates approved by the [Federalist Society](#), a group with strong ties to the anti-union Koch brothers.

The president [promised](#) in 2015 to only appoint justices who would overturn the Affordable Care Act (ACA), and in the past Kavanaugh has favored overturning well established Supreme Court precedents. [Sign our petition urging your Senator to vote NO on Kavanaugh.](#)



A case regarding key protections for patients with pre-existing conditions could be making its way to the Court soon. If confirmed, Kavanaugh may be the deciding vote in repealing the health care law and stripping affordable health insurance away from millions. According to a report by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, more than half of all Americans have at least one

pre-existing condition, including [75 percent of people ages 45 to 54 and 84 percent of people between the ages of 55 to 64](#).

Numerous Senate Democrats have [vowed](#) not to support Kavanaugh, citing his judicial record on a wide variety of issues. The Administration and the Senate Republican leadership are pushing for him to be confirmed before the next Supreme Court session in October, but the vetting and hearing process could take much longer.

“The President’s Supreme Court appointment will affect this country and its laws for generations,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “We must protect the rights of our oldest and most vulnerable citizens. We must reject the nomination of Judge Kavanaugh.”

Sen. Rubio Proposes Eroding Social Security by Allowing it to be Used for Family Leave

Sen. **Marco Rubio** (FL) will introduce legislation that would supposedly create national paid parental leave, but in fact would mean cuts in future earned Social Security benefits. While the United States is the only developed nation that does not offer paid leave, Sen. Rubio’s plan forces families to choose between caring for a new child and risking their financial security in retirement.

The proposal would allow parents of newborns or newly adopted children to take twelve weeks from their Social Security benefits early, later reducing or delaying that person’s benefits at retirement age to make up the difference. Retirees would have to delay their Social Security benefits by approximately [twenty five weeks](#) per each paid leave, more than twice as long as the initial time off.

Carrie Lukas of the Koch brothers’ funded group Independent Women’s Forum developed the plan on which Rubio’s bill is modeled. Lukas [specifically said](#) that the plan will speed the privatization of Social Security by changing public perception of the system from a social insurance program to a system of personal accounts -- and make it easier to raise the retirement age. She wrote, “Once people become used to the ideal of people opting to push back their retirement age, it may become less difficult to gradually raise the normal retirement age to reflect increases in longevity.”

The legislation would also harm the long-term financial outlook for Social Security. A recent study by the right-leaning [American Action Forum](#) found that Rubio’s legislation would cause the program to face a shortfall at least six months sooner than it otherwise would.

Sen. **Kirsten Gillibrand** (NY) has introduced [broader legislation](#) granting paid leave to new parents and workers taking time off to care for a sick family member. Sen. Gillibrand’s proposal would have both workers and employers pay into a newly created fund that reaches every worker regardless of their job or industry.

“Sen. Rubio’s plan will have a long term negative effect on both workers and retirees,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “We must not force workers to choose between their financial security when starting and adding to a family or later in life.”

Pension Rally in Columbus, Ohio Draws Attention to Plans on the Brink of Failing

Retirees and workers rallied in Columbus, Ohio yesterday to bring attention to the growing pension crisis. About [130 multiemployer pension plans](#) covering 1.3 million people, are projected

to reach insolvency within the next twenty years. Without Congressional action, the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) insurance trust fund for multiemployer pension plans will be insolvent by 2025.



Activists at the rally in Columbus on Thursday (photo credit: Norm Wernet)

Numerous pension funds are on the brink of failure, faced with large retiree populations and significantly fewer workers paying into the system. When a plan faces insolvency, retirees could see massive cuts to the earned benefits they rely on to maintain their finances.

Congress has created a special bipartisan committee tasked with finding a solution to the pension crisis and ensuring workers' hard-earned benefits are paid in full. The Bipartisan Budget Act in February 2018 created a 16-member bipartisan panel of Congress to address the solvency of multi-employer pension plans and the PBGC, and it must report back to Congress by November 2018. The rally preceded the committee's field hearing, occurring today in Columbus, where members of Congress will hear directly from affected retirees.

"It is critical that Congress acts sooner rather than later," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "Retirees have put in a lifetime of hard work and earned these benefits, and it is time for Congress to step up and protect what has been promised."

Take Action! Call 888-979-9806 and tell members of the Joint Select Committee on Solvency and Multiemployer Pension Plans that it's time to protect pensions.

AFT Retirees Convene in Pittsburgh



Executive Director Fiesta spoke at the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Retirees Convention in Pittsburgh on Friday. Left: Rich Fiesta with AFT retiree and Illinois Alliance member Bea Lumpkin. Right: AFT President Randi Weingarten addresses attendees.

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.