

# FRIDAY ALERT



## Alliance for Retired Americans

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[www.retiredamericans.org](http://www.retiredamericans.org)

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

July 27, 2018

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## House Democrats and Alliance Members Draw Attention to Medicare Cuts Ahead of Anniversary

U.S. House Minority Leader **Nancy Pelosi** held a press conference Wednesday to bring attention to rising drug prices and continued threats to Medicare and Medicaid.

“Medicare and Medicaid are the pillars of health and security in our nation, pillars which are sadly under threat from years of relentless attacks from the Republicans,” said Leader Pelosi. “The GOP tax scam is the capstone of the Republican health care agenda of putting the wealthy and well-connected ahead of workers and seniors and families.”

Former Virginia Alliance President **Ron Thompson** spoke about his experiences trying to afford medical care and rising drug prices at the press conference. Before he was eligible for Medicare, had difficulties paying for prescription medications. “I refused my prescription because of the copay,” said Thompson. “Two more prescriptions were rejected by my insurance because the cost was too high.” Thompson explained that he’s living proof of the effects of high prescription drug costs.



Alliance member Ron Thompson speaks at Leader Pelosi's press conference on Wednesday.

“The anniversaries of Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security mark the important passage of these programs into law, and the benefits they provide to retirees and workers across the

country,” said **Richard Fiesta**, the Alliance’s Executive Director,. “We must stand up to continued attacks and cuts to vital lifelines that provide seniors with a quality life.”

[Check here](#) to find a local anniversary celebration event happening near you.

## Union Members Rally Against Illegal Executive Orders

The Alliance joined unions from across the country stood in solidarity with the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) on Wednesday, rallying ahead of oral court arguments that challenge President Trump’s most recent attack on federal unions. The arguments are part of a lawsuit brought by AFGE and other unions that represent federal employees.

The president signed [three executive orders](#) that significantly limit the amount of official time union representatives can spend on union related activity, call for more aggressive negotiations, and even allow agencies to charge unions rent. The unions are challenging the legality of these order saying that they exceed presidential power and severely limit First Amendment protections. A decision in the case is expected soon.



The rally in Washington D.C. included multiple lawmakers and union leaders who explained how the orders are a direct attack on workers’ rights. “This is more than union busting, it’s democracy busting,” said **J. David Cox**, President of AFGE. Alliance members participated in this event, and others around the country.

“We won’t stand by as this administration and the corporate right-wing come after our most fundamental rights and freedoms,” said **Richard Trumka**, President of the AFL-CIO.

## Report Showcases Problem Areas in Labor Rights Across the Globe and How to Fix Them

A new report about the [future of work](#) published by the International Labour Organization (ILO) indicates that much more needs to be done to improve the quality of employment globally.

The analysis demonstrates that continued deregulation of world labor markets and repeated attacks on unions have placed collective bargaining in danger, with union membership waning globally between 2005 and 2015. The rise of the “gig” economy and expanding globalization and outsourcing have also left many workers without a voice and without access to quality benefits and employment.

But the report also suggests that there is still hope for unions and workers’ rights internationally. Trade unions continue to be largest membership-based organizations worldwide despite membership decline and many countries have improved social protections like access to basic

healthcare and social security for workers. New workers centers that provide services and representation for low-income groups like migrant workers who normally do not have access to unions are also cropping up more and more in the United States.

The main takeaway is that when employers adhere to labor standards like safety and health guidelines and provide benefits like living wages and paid family leave, it not only helps them and their workers, it also benefits the global workforce as a whole.

“The results of this research confirm that many workers across the globe still do not have access to quality employment and protections.” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “This matters to working people as well as retirees. Without a secure retirement, workers will stay in the workforce longer, making it difficult for younger people to find quality jobs. As policymakers consider the future of work they must also consider retirement security. The issues are inextricably linked.”

### **States With a History of Racial Discrimination Have Most Aggressive Voter Purges** ***All Voters Urged to Re-confirm their Voter Registration***

A [new report](#) from the Brennan Center for Justice found that 12 states with racially discriminatory pasts have been removing people from voter rolls at an aggressive pace. The report focused on the 2012-2016 time period.

The practice, known as voter purging, has accelerated since the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a key part of the Voting Rights Act in 2013. The provision, known as preclearance, required jurisdictions with a history of racial prejudice to get federal approval before enacting any voter roll changes. Repealing the preclearance provision has led to the removal of more than two million voters in jurisdictions that previously required approval.

The Justice Department is responsible for preventing overly aggressive voter purge practices, but under President Trump the department has softened its approach. For example, the department has opted to send letters to certain jurisdictions to inquire about their purging practices, but many view this action as a way for the Trump administration to push for more aggressive voter removal.

The Brennan Center report also highlights that in recent years voter purge lawsuits have gone from protecting voters to challenging a state’s purge practices as not being aggressive enough. Since 2013, four states (Alabama, Arizona, Indiana, and Maine) have implemented unlawful rules about purging, and another four (Florida, New York, North Carolina, and Virginia) have actually engaged in illegal voter purging practices. Combined, these states have over 25% of registered voters in the country.

“Taking steps to stop illegal voter purging practices is necessary to protect the right to vote,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “The Voting Rights Act must be reinstated, and accurate information must be used, to ensure that seniors across the country are not disenfranchised.”

***We urge all Alliance members -- regardless of where you live -- to be proactive and confirm that they are still registered. You can do this by contacting you local Board of Elections, or by checking online at [www.vote.org](http://www.vote.org)***

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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.