

# FRIDAY ALERT



**Alliance for Retired Americans**

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## In Victory for Labor, Missouri Voters Defeat Harmful “Right to Work” Proposition

Voters in Missouri [resoundingly defeated](#) Proposition A, an anti-union “Right to Work” measure, on Tuesday. So-called “Right to Work” laws make it illegal for unions to charge private sector workers fees for representation, leading to free riding and crippling unions’ power to represent workers.



Alliance staff calling voters in Missouri.

The state’s legislature put Missouri on track to become the 28th state to enact the anti-worker legislation in 2017, until union members and advocates gathered enough signatures to put the measure on the ballot. The move suspended the law’s implementation and allowed voters to support union workers, with 67% voting to defeat it on Tuesday.

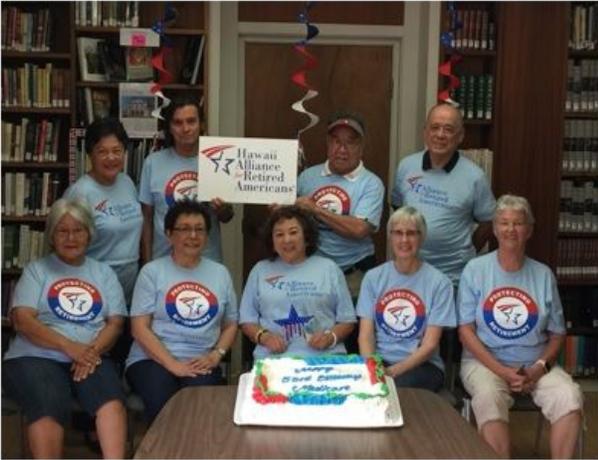
The issue was deeply unpopular with both Democrats and Republicans. [An analysis](#) of the final vote showed that only about half of the Republicans who cast a ballot in Tuesday’s primary supported Proposition A. More than 330,000 Republicans split from their party to support unions and worker freedom.

In “Right to Work” states, workers and families experience lower wages, increased gender wage gaps, stagnant job growth, and numerous other worker inequality issues. The laws also negatively affect workers’ retirements, often eliminating pensions and decreasing health benefits.

"Missouri Alliance members played an active role in the defeat of the Proposition A campaign, making thousands of phone contacts with voters in advance of today’s vote," said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. "I was pleased to have had the opportunity to join AFL-CIO President **Trumka** for a tele-town hall recently and urge Missourians to turn out to vote for better pay and a more secure retirement."

## Anniversary Events Continue Drawing Attention to Attempts to Cut Earned Benefits

Alliance members continued to bring attention to the 53rd anniversary of Medicare and Medicaid on July 30 and the upcoming 83rd anniversary of Social Security on August 14, holding 15 additional events across the country since last week. The Nebraska Alliance celebrated in Lincoln on Tuesday with **Steve Jones**, President of the Lincoln Central Labor Union; Nebraska AFL-CIO President and Secretary-Treasurer **Sue Martin**; 1st Congressional District candidate **Jessica McClure**; and U.S. Senate Candidate **Jane Raybould**.



Hawaii members celebrating in Honolulu



CARA Education Fund President Sandra Mack (left) and CARA Legislative Director and Vice President Hene Kelly (center) with House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi



North Carolina members celebrating Social Security anniversary

Seniors in Sarasota and Punta Gorda, Florida celebrated the birthday of Social Security by awarding Reps. **Vern Buchanan** and **Tom Rooney** “Retiree Zeroes,” noting their 0% scores on the Alliance’s 2017 Congressional Voting Record.



Rep. Adam Smith receives a Retiree “Hero” Award from Washington State Alliance President Jackie Boschok.

New York State Alliance members gathered with disability and health care advocates to celebrate the anniversaries in New York City on Thursday. Among the organizations taking part were Metro New York Health Care for All, the American Medical Student Association, Gray Panthers NYC, Radical Age Movement, Health Care for America Now, and numerous unions.

“The anniversaries are a wonderful opportunity to join with our coalition partners, show the public which elected official is a ‘Hero’ and who is a ‘Zero,’ and call on lawmakers to protect Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid for current and future retirees,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance.

## **Bankruptcies Increasing Among Older Americans**

[New research](#) from the Consumer Bankruptcy Project found that more seniors are filing for bankruptcy than ever before. Bankruptcy filings for those age 65 and older are up by more than 204% from 1991, and seniors now make up the biggest share of bankruptcy filers of any age group.

The problems stem from decades of declining and failing pensions, rising medical costs, stagnant wages, and an overall lack of retirement savings. The report cites financial risks shifting from the government and employers on to individuals. For example, older Americans are now dealing with the replacement of defined benefit pensions with defined contribution accounts and increased out of pocket medical costs.

While bankruptcy can sometimes provide a fresh start for younger workers in financial distress, older workers often don’t get the same rewards. Younger people have many years to build up a savings again, but seniors often see their savings dry up with nothing to fall back on. Finding a

second job or going back to work can be difficult, and the prospect of losing a home is inconceivable.

More than a third of seniors in the study cited helping others as a cause of their filing. Some are unable to pay back the exponentially high student loans they co-signed for their children, and others have taken on extra costs after becoming the main caretakers for their grandchildren or older parents.

The study finds that the overall trend signals an increasingly negative financial situation for retirees and older workers.

“This is further evidence of the serious retirement security issues we face in our country,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “With so many seniors in dire financial situations, we must continue to work to expand Social Security and protect the pensions that seniors have earned over a lifetime of hard work.”

### **Virginia Alliance Holds Its Convention**

Virginia Alliance members gathered for their convention in Williamsburg on Wednesday, with Virginia AFL-CIO President **Doris Crouse-Mays** speaking about the importance of the 2018 midterm elections and State Representative **Chris Hurst** talking about Virginia's Medicaid expansion. Alliance Legislative Representative **Eva Dominguez** spoke about the Republican tax scam that gave tax cuts to corporations and wealthy Americans, increasing the deficit by \$1.9 trillion, and the Republican plan to use the deficit as an excuse to cut Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security.



Virginia's convention attendees

## **Fiesta Speaks at A. Philip Randolph Institute Conference**

At the A. Philip Randolph Institute (APRI) 2018 Educational Conference in Phoenix, Arizona today, Executive Director Fiesta spoke about attacks on voting rights, efforts to limit voter turnout, and how seniors can [ensure their right to vote](#).

The [A. Philip Randolph Institute](#) is a constituency organization within the AFL-CIO representing African-American union members. It advocates for social, labor, and economic progress and change at all levels of government.

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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.