

# FRIDAY ALERT



**Alliance for Retired Americans**

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## **Rep. Steve Stivers: GOP Campaign Chair Says to Cut Social Security and Medicare to Pay for Tax Scam**

To reduce the ballooning national debt caused by the GOP tax cut scam, House Republican Campaign Chair **Steve Stivers** of Ohio is calling for cuts to earned Social Security and Medicare benefits. The national deficit is poised to surpass [\\$1 trillion](#) by 2020 due the tax bill passed last year, and Rep. Stivers said in a [recent interview](#) that Congress must “deal with some of our spending” in order to address it.

Stivers also said he agrees with House Speaker **Paul Ryan** (WI) that Social Security and Medicare represent “the biggest spending issues.” He went on to complain about too many people qualifying for Social Security Disability Insurance benefits, and he refused to rule out raising the retirement age. He also called “premium support” for Medicare - vouchers that only cover a fraction of what patients are actually charged - “a way forward.”

“The GOP leadership is stating clearly that they are coming for our earned Social Security and Medicare benefits,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “We knew when that tax bill was passed, they would move to cut our Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid next. We must vote in November and elect candidates who will protect and expand earned benefits, not cut them.”

## **Sen. Casey Shows How Kavanaugh Confirmation Would Harm Retirees**

Sen. **Bob Casey** (D-PA), ranking member of the United States Senate Special Committee on Aging, has released a [fact sheet](#) detailing Supreme Court nominee **Brett Kavanaugh**'s disastrous record on issues relating to aging, disability, retirement, and health care.

The sheet highlights numerous cases that Kavanaugh argued or decided that raise alarm. Perhaps most concerning is Kavanaugh's repeated attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) through the courts. President **Trump** [promised](#) to only appoint justices who would overturn the ACA, and Kavanaugh's record shows he falls into line. Kavanaugh has disagreed at least twice with rulings upholding the law's constitutionality. If the ACA is overturned, millions of older Americans with pre-existing conditions could lose their coverage.

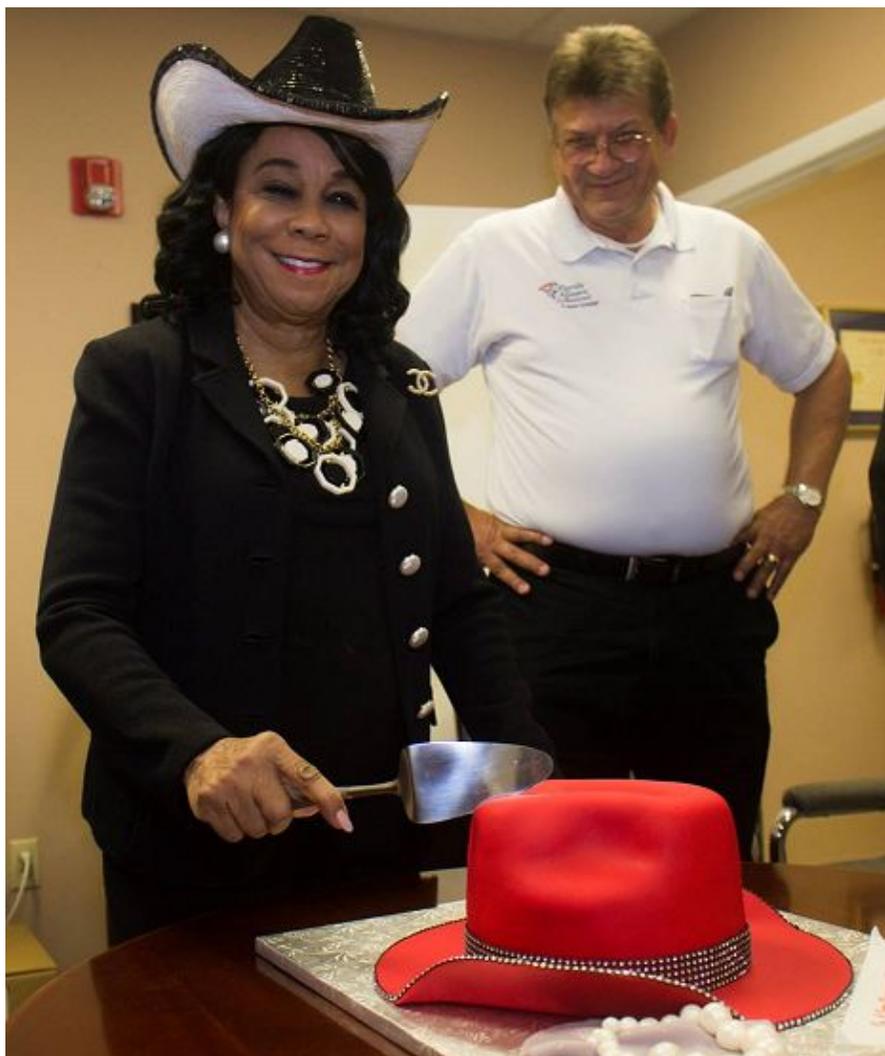
Kavanaugh has a particularly worrisome record concerning people with disabilities. He ruled against disabled patients' ability to make decisions about their own lives, taking away the right of

self-determination and allowing the government to make medical decisions for them without first learning their wishes. He also sided with employers in numerous disability discrimination and retaliation cases.

As an attorney Kavanaugh argued that age discrimination protections in place for older workers should not apply in some situations, and as a judge he ruled that the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) was unconstitutional. If the CFPB were dissolved, older Americans would lose a key source of unbiased information regarding retirement planning, financial resources, and how to protect themselves from fraud.

“Brett Kavanaugh’s record proves that he will not protect retirees’ interests,” said Alliance Secretary-Treasurer **Joseph Peters, Jr.** “Confirming him to serve on the United States Supreme Court would be a catastrophe for older Americans who rely on the court system to look out for their health care and economic rights.”

### **Social Security’s Anniversary Celebrations Continue Across the Country**



Alliance members continued to celebrate the 83rd anniversary of Social Security this week, hosting multiple events across the nation to draw attention to the importance of the program as a cornerstone of retirement security.

Highlights included a Miami Gardens, Florida event honoring Rep. **Frederica Wilson** and naming her a “Retiree Hero” for her 2017 pro-retiree voting record from the Alliance and her commitment to older Americans.

Rep. Wilson cuts a Social Security “hat cake” alongside Florida Alliance President Bill Sauers

Rep. **Michael Capuano** was also saluted as a “Retiree Hero” for his pro-retiree voting record and career standing up for seniors’ best interests and the Massachusetts Alliance endorsed him for re-election to the U.S. House.



Rep. Michael Capuano (center) with Massachusetts Alliance members, including state President John Ratliff (second from right)

### **Arthritis Treatment Reinforces Need for More Affordable Prescription Drugs**

According to the [Arthritis Foundation](#), more than 50% of adults aged 65 and older report having a doctor-diagnosed form of arthritis. Overall, 91.2 million adults are either diagnosed or report symptoms consistent with the disease, which also disproportionately affects active duty members of the military and veterans.

Since there isn't a cure for arthritis, medical costs for patients are high. In 2013, 66 million patients spent about \$140 billion for arthritis-attributable medical costs, averaging \$2,117 per person. Osteoarthritis was the second most costly medical condition treated at hospitals in the same year, and costs jump even higher for patients needing a joint replacement.

The high costs associated with such a common disease are indicative of a much larger problem patients face with their overall drug costs. Prescription drug prices have increased at [ten times the rate of inflation](#).

“We need drug companies to find better drugs that address acute diseases like arthritis, rather than producing new drugs that simply offer drug corporations an easy profit,” said Alliance President **Robert Roach, Jr.** “And we can’t have America bear the cost of that innovation, then let other countries get those same drugs at better prices than we pay. But we also need drugmakers to get those new medications to consumers safely and quickly.”

“Americans pay the highest prescription drug prices in the world, but it doesn’t have to be that way,” continued President Roach. “The administration’s blueprint to lower drug prices doesn’t include some of the most important solutions, such as allowing Medicare to negotiate drug prices. Anyone with arthritis or any expensive, chronic disease should be concerned that our best potential solutions are not being implemented.”

### **Fiesta Speaks at APWU Convention**

Executive Director Fiesta spoke at the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) Retirees Pre-Convention meeting last Saturday in Pittsburgh. He spoke about the importance of the senior vote in the upcoming midterm elections, and he celebrated the birthdays of Social Security and Medicare with the attendees. APWU members and retirees also held a rally in downtown Pittsburgh this week to protest increased attempts by the administration to privatize the postal service as a way to shrink the size of the federal government.