

FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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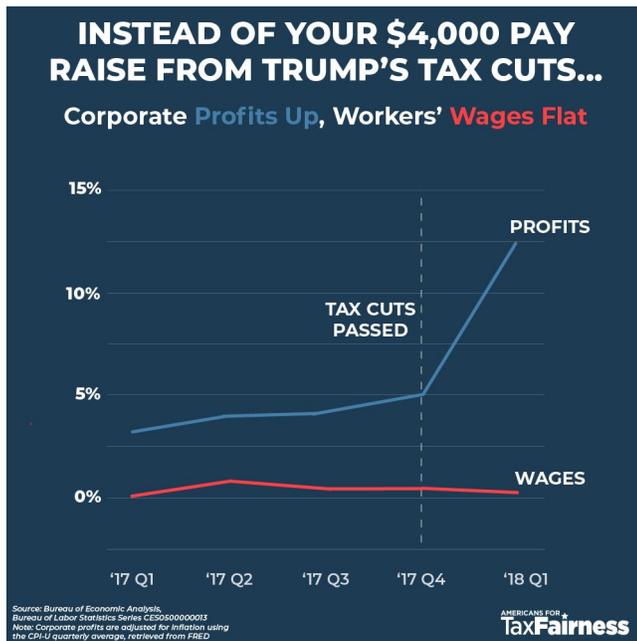
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August 31, 2018

The Alliance sends our best wishes for a safe and happy Labor Day to all our members. We hope you will take a moment to reflect on all that unions have done to provide a better life for all workers and retirees.

Spotlight on Families Left Behind by the GOP Tax Scam as Labor Day Weekend Begins

Ahead of this weekend's Labor Day celebrations, the Alliance joined advocates for retirees and working families in highlighting the ways in which last year's tax cuts have weakened most families bottom line and economic security.



Supporters of the tax cuts claimed that workers would see a \$4,000 wage hike if the bill was passed, but the opposite has been true. Corporate profits have jumped 8.2 percent, while tax revenue from those same companies have plummeted 44 percent and workers' wages have remained stagnant. In fact, only 4 percent of workers have received a bonus or a wage increase since the tax scam was passed, and most were not even close to the \$4,000 promised. Instead, companies have invested over one hundred times more in stock buybacks than they have in wage growth, and CEOs have enjoyed salaries over 312 times the average worker's pay.

“Big corporations and wealthy CEOs are investing these tax cuts into their bottom line as many American workers struggle to get by,” said

Richard Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance. “We must stand in solidarity to fight for better wages and a secure retirement.”

New “Pre-Existing Conditions” Bill Offers Little Protection

Last Friday, several Senate Republicans [introduced legislation](#) that would prohibit insurers from denying coverage to patients with pre-existing conditions but with a catch. Sponsors say the bill

will act as an antidote in the event that protections now provided through the Affordable Care Act are struck down in an [upcoming lawsuit](#) led by numerous Republican states.

However this bill provides little protection for policyholders: while insurance companies could not refuse to sell a policy to a person with a pre-existing condition, they can decline to cover any future care related to a patient's condition. As an example, insurers couldn't refuse to sell a policy to customer with a history of cancer, but they could exclude any coverage for related future care such as cancer screenings and treatment. Insurers could also charge higher premiums based on age, gender, or occupation, essentially rendering the pre-existing condition protections useless.

[An analysis](#) done by the Kaiser Family Foundation shows that pre-existing conditions are prevalent in many parts of the country, afflicting more than 40% of adults in some areas, and that 47% of adults aged 60 to 64 would be denied coverage due to a pre-existing condition without protections from the Affordable Care Act.

“This legislation is the latest in a series of gimmicks meant to distract Americans from constant Republican moves to take health care away from millions,” said Alliance President **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “We must instead work to strengthen and defend the protections already afforded to us by the Affordable Care Act.”

Republicans Continue to Use Dangerous “Entitlement” Cuts As a Talking Point For How to Control Deficit

GOP lawmakers and pundits have renewed their push to cut Social Security and Medicare benefits in order to cut federal spending. The national deficit is poised to surpass [\\$1 trillion](#) by 2020 as a result of last year's tax bill. **Kevin Hassett**, chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, specifically mentioned cutting earned benefits as a way to reduce spending in a [recent interview](#).



Kevin Hassett speaks during an interview on CNBC's "Squawk Newsmaker" show

The interview highlighted the president's already broken promises to never cut Social Security and Medicare, but Hassett stated that earned benefit programs will have to be cut eventually to keep the deficit in check: "The question is at what point do you do entitlements, and over a 20- or 30-year horizon you have to do it, and so my guess is the conversation picks up."

Hassett made these remarks on the same day that Republican Rep. **Steve Stivers** (OH) [stated](#) that Social Security and Medicare represent "the biggest spending issues." Stivers refused to rule out raising the retirement age as a solution, and promoted minimal-coverage Medicare vouchers as a way to reduce expenditures.

"The tax scam made the national deficit swell tremendously, but going after our hard earned benefits won't fix that," said Alliance Secretary-Treasurer **Joseph Peters Jr.** "It is clear that Republicans will continue to attack the things that older Americans rely on, and we must elect candidates who will protect rather than slash these benefits in November."

Federal Court Finds that North Carolina's Congressional Map Remains Unconstitutionally Rigged

A panel of three federal judges [upheld a ruling](#) that found North Carolina's congressional district boundaries unconstitutional this week. The case was reconsidered after the U.S. Supreme Court requested that the Greensboro-based federal court re-examine the districts based on a recent gerrymandering issue in Wisconsin.

The judges found that North Carolina's districts, enacted in 2016, were drawn using political data to ensure that Republicans would hold [10 of the 13 seats](#) in the state's congressional delegation. The 2016 boundaries were the result of other federal lawsuits finding that the state's 2011 districts were illegally drawn with excessive racial bias.

There is a possibility that the judges could direct the state to [redraw the districts](#) in time for the November midterm elections. Judge **Jim Wynn** wrote in his majority opinion that the state should no longer use the 2016 map for any further congressional elections. However, lawyers in the case are expecting an appeal to potentially reach the U.S. Supreme Court, which may force the redistricting process to wait until 2020.

Georgia Officials Try to Use the Americans with Disabilities Act as Reason to Disenfranchise Minority Voters

Election officials in Randolph County, Georgia, rejected [a proposal](#) last week to close seven of nine polling locations in the majority-black, rural county. Michael Malone, a consultant hired by the county, asserted that some polling locations should close because they were not fully compliant

with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). But [reports found](#) that he had ties with **Brian Kemp**, the Republican nominee for Georgia's governor with a [track record of voter suppression](#).

The Justice Department has [also used the ADA](#) to target several minority-majority counties with polling locations that do not fully meet stringent compliance requirements, threatening enforcement actions unless local governments either pay the expenses to update the locations, or close them completely. Under the Trump administration, at least five enforcement actions have been settled in counties that are predominantly non-white, or have significant minority populations.

"Polling places should be accessible to voters with disabilities," said Mr. Fiesta. "But selectively closing polling places in minority communities, rather than identifying replacement locations, is wrong and a cynical use of the Americans with Disabilities Act."

Voting rights are under attack across the nation. Know your rights! To confirm your voter registration and find more information, contact your local board of elections or visit www.vote.org.

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.