

# FRIDAY ALERT



## Alliance for Retired Americans

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## New Congressional Caucus Created to Expand Social Security

The Alliance joined coalition partner organizations on Thursday at an [event](#) introducing the Expand Social Security Congressional Caucus, a new congressional group aimed at expanding, protecting and strengthening Social Security for all Americans. The event was hosted by Senators **Bernie Sanders** (VT) and **Elizabeth Warren** (MA), and Representatives **John Larson** (CT) and **Debbie Dingell** (MI). The Expand Social Security Caucus is now the largest congressional caucus, and includes over 150 members in both the House and Senate. So far, no Republicans have joined the caucus.

The event featured many speakers who addressed the importance of Social Security across the country. "After a lifetime of hard work, people are entitled to retire with dignity," said Senator Warren.



Senator Sanders shared his frustration with the notion that cutting Social Security will help cover the deficit from the Republican Tax Scam passed last year.

"Paul Ryan gave well over a trillion dollars in tax breaks to the top 1%, and then complained about the deficit going up and wants to cut Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid," Sanders explained. "We must recognize that in the

Left to right in foreground Thursday: Sen. Elizabeth Warren, Sen. Bernie Sanders, Rep. John Larson (speaking), and Rep. Debbie Dingell

wealthiest country in the world, we are going to protect vulnerable people, including senior citizens and people with disabilities."

The average monthly Social Security benefit for retirees nationwide is a modest [\\$1,413](#), putting many seniors just above the federal poverty line. The House GOP budget proposed approximately [\\$4 billion](#) in cuts to Social Security this past year by eliminating dual benefits for unemployment and disability insurance.



Executive Director Fiesta at the podium Thursday

"Data shows that older Americans are still filing for bankruptcy at an alarmingly high rate. That is not an America that we want to see," Alliance Executive Director **Richard Fiesta** said at the event. "Our members are organized, energized, and mobilized to help expand Social Security," he added.

To see if your Representative is a member of the "Expand" caucus, click [here](#). If your House member is listed, please click [here to thank him or her](#).

If your Representative is not listed, please click [here to urge them to join the caucus](#).

At the event Rep. Larson highlighted a new [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities \(CBPP\) study](#) that says the revenue loss from the GOP Tax Scam will come at a time when the baby boom generation will retire in large numbers and move into "old-old age," causing Medicare and Social Security expenditures to rise considerably. 2026 is the first year in which every member of the baby boom generation — including the youngest — will be eligible to draw Social Security retirement benefits.

### **Sen. Sherrod Brown: Workers, Retirees At Risk If Kavanaugh Confirmed**

The Alliance hosted a tele-town hall event with thousands of members on Wednesday to discuss the nomination of **Brett Kavanaugh** to the Supreme Court. Speaking about the impact Kavanaugh's confirmation would have on retirees and workers were Sen. **Sherrod Brown** (OH); **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance; **Ed Jayne**, Associate Director, Federal Government Affairs Department of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME); and **Becky Levin**, Legislative Affairs Specialist with AFSCME.

"As a judge, Brett Kavanaugh has strongly argued against keeping protections contained in the Affordable Care Act for people with pre-existing health conditions," **President Roach** told listeners. "This is particularly important to older Americans, since we know [84% of people 55 - 64 have at least one pre-existing health condition](#)."

Sen. Brown shared a personal story about how pre-existing conditions have affected his family and explained why confirming Judge Kavanaugh would be harmful for seniors, discussing Kavanaugh's rulings favoring wealthy corporate interests over working Americans.

"I met with Judge Kavanaugh previously, and I was not impressed with his record on health care, labor unions, and workers' rights. We already have a Supreme Court that doesn't interpret the law, they make law," Brown said.

Participants on the call learned that [25 million](#) Americans between 50 and 64 would be affected by rolling back protections for patients with pre-existing conditions. The issue is central to [a case](#) challenging the Affordable Care Act, in which Kavanaugh could be the deciding vote. Additionally, only 7% of requested documents were provided to the Senate Judiciary Committee ahead of Kavanaugh's confirmation hearings last week.

"We must stop the confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh to become the next justice on the United States Supreme Court, and we need your help to do it before the Senate votes on September 20," said President Roach.

***The Alliance is urging you to call your Senators and explain why Judge Kavanaugh is dangerous for retirees. Call (855) 712-8430 to be patched through to your Senator's office.***

### **"Tax Scam 2.0" Includes Retirement Tax Shelters for the Extremely Wealthy**

Republican lawmakers released their "[Tax Bill 2.0](#)" this week, aiming to expand upon tax cuts for the [wealthiest 1% of Americans](#) and large corporations that passed in 2017. Included in the new bill are provisions related to making permanent the individual tax breaks that currently have an expiration date and creating new retirement plans that would benefit the well-heeled disproportionately.

The retirement aspect of the plan would create Universal Savings Accounts (USAs), similar to Roth Individual Savings Accounts (Roth IRAs) for families. A USA would keep all earnings, interest, and capital tax free forever, while eliminating any income limit or distribution requirement. The [Republican plan](#) suggests that these accounts would help the middle class save for retirement; however, studies suggest the opposite.

[Research from CBPP](#) has found that USA accounts would lead to huge deficits for the federal government and add to ever growing federal budget problems. Additionally, the accounts would mostly help the extremely wealthy who have significantly more resources to transfer into a USA and can easily replenish early disbursements in time for a secure retirement. CBPP's research also highlighted the potential for USA accounts to actually decrease savings for some middle-income households.

"The Tax Scam 2.0 is an insulting attempt to make the already harmful tax scam even worse for the middle class," said Alliance Secretary-Treasurer **Joseph Peters Jr.** "We must find real solutions for growing retirement savings, not incentivize income inequality."

## Join Us at the Alliance's 2018 National Membership Meeting in Las Vegas



Please join us at the Alliance for Retired Americans' quadrennial [National Membership Meeting](#) on November 13-15, 2018 at the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas. Attendees will participate in workshops, vote on resolutions, elect Alliance officers and at-large board members, and network with other retiree activist leaders. During the Awards Banquet luncheon, we will recognize outstanding work done by state Alliances and activists.

You can download a registration form [here](#) or [register for the meeting online](#). The deadline to register for the meeting is October 11, 2018, and hotel reservations must be made by October 23,

2018. For more details, email **Joni Jones** at [jjones@retiredamericans.org](mailto:jjones@retiredamericans.org).

Informed advocates are needed to protect and strengthen Social Security, Medicare and pensions and to resist special interests that threaten our retirement security. Be a part of our growing movement working to protect retirement for current and future generations.

### Ahead of Hurricane Florence, Caring for Older Residents A Priority

In anticipation of Hurricane Florence's landfall, officials throughout the Southeast have prepared to [aid older residents](#) who may be homebound, unable to evacuate, or require special assistance. Moving residents in nursing and care facilities can pose difficulties for health concerns, capacity of other hospitals and facilities, and transportation.

Nursing homes in the Carolinas have been evacuated, while others further away from the hurricane's effects will be sheltering in place. For older Americans living at home, losing electricity can be the biggest hurdle. [Emergency shelters](#) requiring advance registration were established throughout the region to aid seniors who require medical assistance.

### South Carolina Alliance Holds its Convention Well Before Hurricane Preparations

The South Carolina Alliance for Retired Americans held its annual convention to coincide with the South Carolina AFL-CIO meeting on Friday, September 7 in Georgetown, SC. Led by president **Donna DeWitt** (CWA), retirees from around the state held an Alliance business meeting and participated in all parts the AFL-CIO convention. **Brendan Kelly**, Director of the Department of Field Mobilization for the Alliance, provided a legislative and mobilization update and state Rep. **James Smith** spoke about his campaign for governor.

"Fortunately the convention took place before the hurricane danger became imminent," said **President Roach**. "Everyone in the Southeast please be safe."