

FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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October 12, 2018

Social Security Beneficiaries to Receive a 2.8% COLA Increase in 2019

The federal government announced yesterday that Social Security beneficiaries will receive a [2.8% cost-of-living adjustment](#) (COLA) for 2019. The increase, while modest, is the largest retirees have seen in seven years. The current average monthly benefit for Social Security is [\\$1,400](#).

"The increase will help all Social Security beneficiaries, seniors, surviving spouses and children, as well as people with disabilities," said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance.

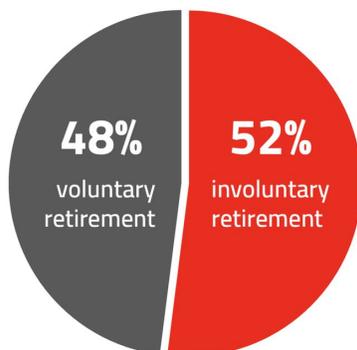
However, the increase is not enough to keep up with the rising cost of health care and especially prescription drugs, which far exceed the rate of inflation.

"We urge Congress to adopt the formula known as the [CPI-E](#), the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly, to calculate future Social Security COLAs," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "The CPI-E is based more on health care and housing costs, things that seniors actually spend their money on."

"We also need every member of the House and Senate to join the Expand Social Security Caucus, a new congressional group committed to expanding, protecting and strengthening Social Security for all Americans," Fiesta added.

New Study: More than Half of Older Workers Are Forced Into Retirement

More Than Half of Retirees Left Last Job Involuntarily



THE NEW SCHOOL
RETIREMENT
EQUITY LAB

Despite low unemployment numbers, new figures from the [Retirement Equity Lab](#) show that many older workers are retiring involuntarily. At least 52% of workers over age 55 were forced into retirement due to factors such as declining health or job loss. Forty-eight percent voluntarily chose to enter retirement, according to economist and retirement expert **Teresa Ghilarducci**.

Older workers often find themselves working longer to make up for inadequate retirement savings and lost pensions, and pushing them into retirement involuntarily can also affect their ability to find another job. Those who are forced into retirement are unemployed longer

compared to younger workers and typically earn 25% less than their previous salary when they do find another job.

Those who have inadequate retirement accounts and leave the workforce involuntarily are also at risk of being [downwardly mobile](#) and falling into poverty.

“This data strengthens the case for strengthening and expanding Social Security,” said **President Roach**. “Social Security is the only reason there aren’t millions of more people in this situation.”

“Raising the retirement age would exacerbate the problems this population faces,” added **Joseph Peters, Jr**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “I would tell anyone who thinks that’s a good idea to check out this study first.”

President Trump Stretches Truth to its Breaking Point in Medicare Op-Ed

An op-ed written by President **Trump**, published in *USA Today* this week was laced with misleading and [factually untrue](#) accusations about Medicare for All, Democrats, and his own record on protecting seniors.

The President falsely stated that “Democrats have already harmed seniors by slashing Medicare by more than [\\$800 billion](#) over 10 years to pay for Obamacare.” In reality, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) did not slash benefits to enrollees; the program’s benefits were expanded, and its solvency was extended. The ACA also allows seniors to receive discounts on prescriptions, annual wellness exams, and preventive screenings for diseases such as colorectal cancer, diabetes and many others without copays or deductibles.

“The reality is that this administration and a Republican-controlled Congress are taking aim at Medicare to cover the whopping deficits created by the 2017 Tax Scam,” said Fiesta.

Several GOP leaders and aides to the President have actually called for drastic cuts to so-called “entitlement spending” in 2019, with White House Economic Advisor **Larry Kudlow** stating that [cuts would occur](#) in the coming year.

The President used the op-ed to tout his campaign pledge to protect retirees, without mentioning key policy failures and broken promises surrounding those who pay sky-high insurance premiums. The administration has declined to defend key aspects of the ACA in a lawsuit, placing protections for those with pre-existing conditions at great risk. Credible experts agree that sabotaging the ACA directly increases costs for older Americans.

The President’s op-ed also misrepresented what Medicare for All would mean for seniors. Current versions of the Medicare for All bills call for important new benefits, including vision, dental and hearing coverage. In addition, they would lower the cost of premiums and deductibles, lessening the financial burden that health care can bring to older Americans.

“Older Americans have good reason to be concerned about the future of Medicare if the President’s advisors have their way, not if Medicare for All is enacted,” summarized Fiesta.

Annual Medicare Open Enrollment Begins October 15

With Medicare's open enrollment period only three days away, it's the perfect time to do a "Medicare Check-up" and make sure that you are in the right Medicare insurance plan for your situation. Visit [eHealth](#) for unbiased resources that help Alliance members with their Medicare needs. This is a free service and there is no obligation to change your plan or enroll.

Learn about the coverage options available to you, and compare existing plans to see what fits your needs best. To speak to a licensed insurance agent at eHealth, an insurance broker specializing in the Medicare insurance plan needs of Alliance members, call 1-888-519-2029 (TTY users: 771) Monday - Friday between 8am - 8pm EST or visit [their website](#).

Medicare open enrollment runs from October 15 to December 7. For more information, please visit [Medicare.gov](#).

Last Chance to Register for the Alliance's 2018 National Membership Meeting in Las Vegas

The deadline is fast approaching to join us at the Alliance for Retired Americans' quadrennial [National Membership Meeting](#) November 13-15, 2018 at the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas. Please register as soon as possible if you have not already done so. Hotel reservations must be made by October 23, 2018.



Attendees will participate in workshops, vote on resolutions, elect Alliance officers and at-large board members, and network with other retiree activists. 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](#). For more details, please email **Joni Jones**

at jjones@retiredamericans.org. Any delegate registered to attend the National Meeting may offer or second a resolution for consideration at Resolutions2018@retiredamericans.org. The resolution must pertain to a statement of the Alliance's position or policy on a specific matter. Resolutions, and seconds, must be received by the Alliance no later than October 24, 2018. The Resolutions Committee, designated by the President, will review proposed resolutions.

The meeting will feature notable guest speakers, including **Nancy Altman** and **David Cay Johnston**. Altman, a well-known Social Security expert, serves as the president of Social Security Works and recently wrote her third book on the program. Johnston, a pensions and tax expert, is

famous for books including *Perfectly Legal: The Covert Campaign to Rig Our Tax System to Benefit the Super Rich — and Cheat Everybody Else*, and for his work covering the President's tax returns. A Pulitzer Prize winning investigative journalist, Johnston regularly appears on MSNBC's *Rachel Maddow Show*.

Executive Director Fiesta Addresses Retirees in Wisconsin, Indiana

Fiesta traveled to Wisconsin to attend the Wisconsin Alliance's (WIARA) annual Power Luncheon on Monday. Rep. **Gwen Moore**, congressional candidate **Tom Palzewicz**, state treasurer candidate **Sarah Godlewski** and a representative for Sen. **Tammy Baldwin** also gave remarks. The speakers all emphasized the upcoming midterm elections, and the need to get out the vote for pro-retiree candidates up and down the ballot.

In addition, Fiesta spoke to a large group of United Auto Workers Local 933 Retirees in Indianapolis on Tuesday. A representative for **Sen. Joe Donnelly** gave remarks at the event.



Rep. Gwen Moore (left) honors Wisconsin Alliance member Vivien DeBack (center) as Wisconsin Alliance President Marlene Ott looks on.