

2018 Activity Report





Leadership Letter

We have never been more proud of the members of the Alliance for Retired Americans than we were in 2018.

The results of the recent midterm election, in which older Americans made a dramatic shift toward Democratic candidates, showed the importance of educating, persuading and mobilizing older voters.

Alliance members were deeply engaged on both retiree issues and organized labor's priorities. We held 130 local Medicare and Social Security anniversary events, a new record, and more than 600 events overall, including state conventions, local actions, lobbying meetings. Our quadrennial national membership convention and meeting drew more than 350 activists. At the meeting we kicked off a new intergenerational program that will help our members learn from young people and draw on their energy to strengthen our advocacy.

Alliance retirees were on the front lines of local and state battles as well, including efforts in Missouri to defeat so-called "right to work" and increase the minimum wage and the fair district and voting rights campaign in Michigan. We developed a program with AFL-CIO affiliates to educate labor leaders and pension participants on the range of challenges facing traditional pensions. We also took the fight to Capitol Hill, pressing for solutions to the multi-employer pension crisis and

the health care and pension rights of mine workers.

The Alliance's midterm election goals were to make sure retirees knew who was on record in support of expanding and protecting earned benefits, and who had voted to put corporate or special interests over retirees. The Alliance's annual Congressional Voting Record laid out the facts, and we worked to get the word out through public events with members of Congress, our Friday Alert newsletter, targeted emails, and social media.

While pro-retiree advocates do not control the Senate, we endorsed and elected a record number of retiree advocates to the House of Representatives, helping Democrats regain control. Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid are far more secure today because of the outcome of the election. We also achieved significant gains at the state level, with Democrats securing more governorships and control of several state legislatures.

Of course, one election did not solve all the challenges facing retirees. The bipartisan House-Senate committee tasked with solving the multi-employer pension crisis missed its self-imposed November 30 deadline for an agreement.

Voter suppression efforts reached new levels this past election cycle, with states imposing limits on early voting, opening fewer polling stations, and more voter ID and signature match laws, all of which disproportionately hurt older and minority voters. The cost of prescription drugs continues to rise, far outpacing inflation, while Congress and the Administration have failed to live up to their promises to lower costs.

Through your support, we are motivated, energized and excited for 2019 and grateful to be able to work on behalf of older Americans every day.

In solidarity,



Robert Roach, Jr.



Joseph Peters, Jr.



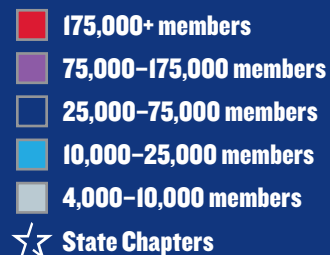
Richard J. Fiesta

The Alliance at a Glance

Who We Are

The Alliance for Retired Americans has 4.4 million members. We are in every state and our retiree activists come from all walks of life. Our members include former teachers, auto workers, government workers, construction workers, community leaders, and even professional football players, all united in the belief that every American deserves a secure and dignified retirement after a lifetime of hard work. Founded by the AFL-CIO in 2001, the Alliance has chapters in 37 states and the District of Columbia.

Alliance for Retired Americans Members

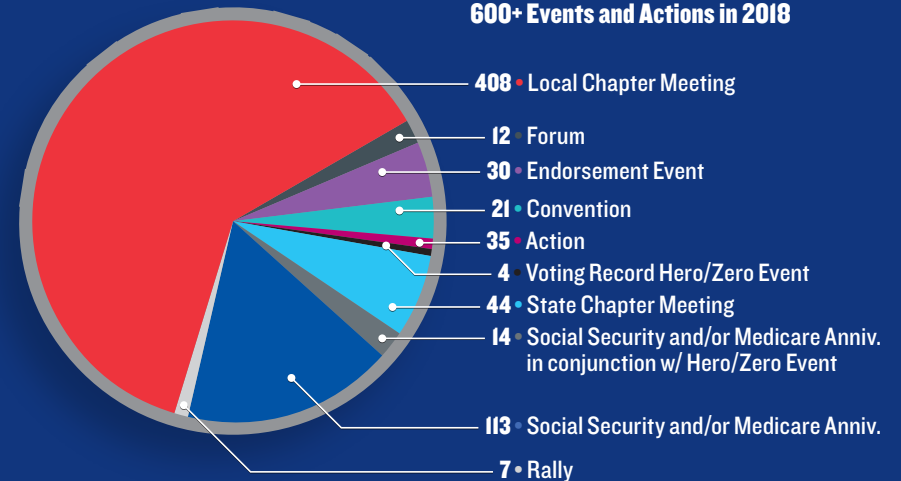


What We Do

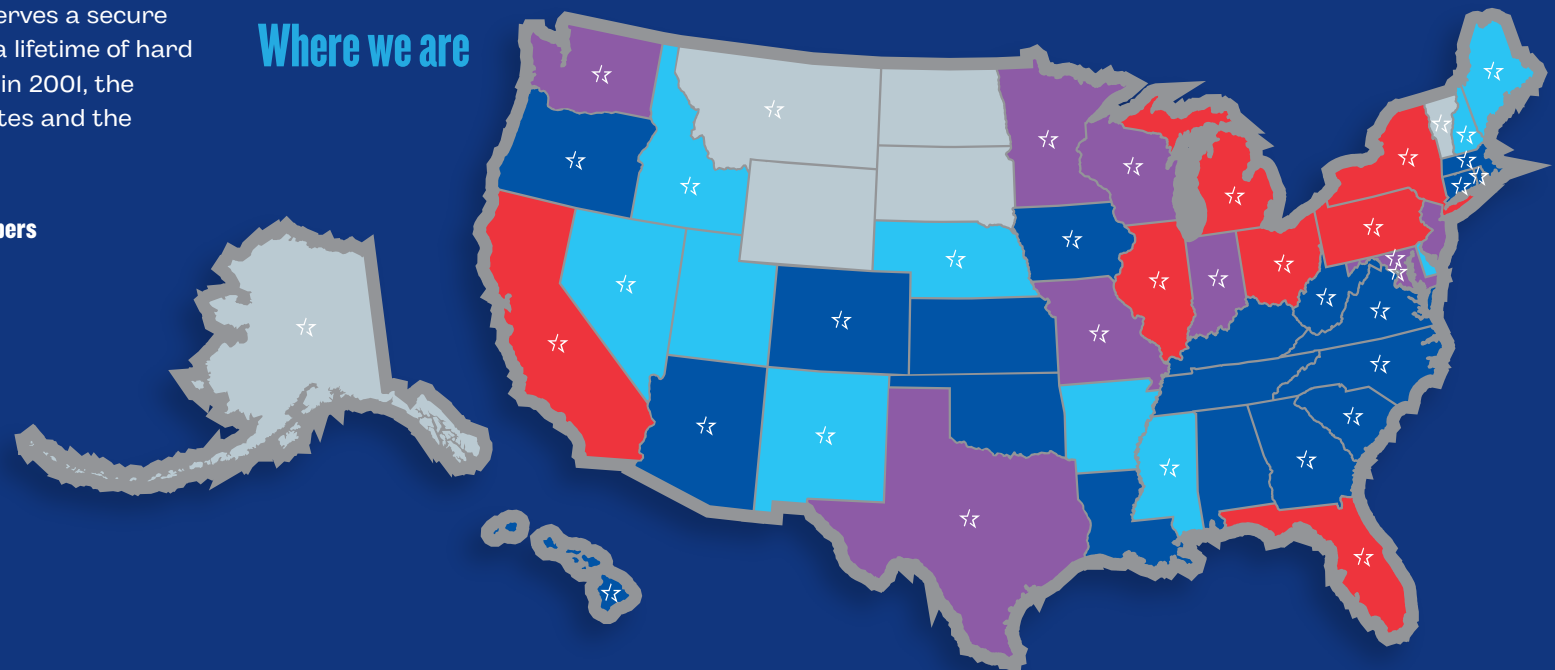
The Alliance's retiree activists know the power of collective action and how to create change in their communities. Often working in coalition with other groups, Alliance members educate the public and media about critical issues, lobby their elected officials, take direct action through creative demonstrations and protests, and organize online and through social media.

This year Alliance members held more than 650 local meetings, membership conventions, actions, endorsement events, news conferences, and lobbying visits.

600+ Events and Actions in 2018



Where we are



Highlights

2018 Anniversary Summer Campaign

Hundreds of events highlight breadth of support for retirement security

Members of the Alliance for Retired Americans marked the anniversaries of the creation of Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid with 130 grassroots events in 31 states including 12 events in North Carolina, 14 in California, 19 in Florida and 20 in Nevada. Thirteen members of Congress, three United States Senators, and many state and local elected officials attended an Alliance anniversary event.

The events highlighted the importance of these programs to millions of older Americans and the threat that the 2017 tax cuts pose to their continued strength. These tax cuts are responsible for dramatic deficit increases totaling \$1.2 trillion. Rather than rolling back even some of these unneeded cuts, congressional Republicans and Trump administration officials are threatening to cut Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid to address the deficit.

These anniversary events remind the public that Social Security and Medicare are benefits that older Americans have earned through a lifetime of hard work. Retirees should not be paying for tax cuts for the wealthiest among us.

Congressional Voting Record and Retiree Hero and Zero Awards

The Alliance released its annual Congressional Voting Record in spring 2018. The report examined 10 key Senate and House votes on issues concerning the health and well being of retirees.

The scored votes concerned Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid; safe prescription drug re-importation from Canada; the Affordable Care Act; medical malpractice lawsuit caps; and tax cuts for wealthy Americans and corporations which hurt older Americans.

Thirty-four members of the U.S. Senate earned perfect scores of 100 percent and 40 earned zeroes. In the U.S. House of Representatives, 178 members received perfect scores of 100 percent while 191 received scores of zero.

Alliance members presented “Retiree Hero” awards to every senator and representative with a 100% pro-retiree score and “Retiree Zero” awards to those who earned a 0% pro-retiree voting record. The “heroes” and “zeroes” were promoted through the Alliance’s social media accounts, local meetings, and press conferences. Some members planned actions to highlight a representative’s poor record. The office of Rep. Devin Nunes (CA-22) went so far as to lock his office and call the police when Alliance members tried to deliver his “Retiree Zero” certificate.





New Expand Social Security Caucus Launched

Alliance executive Director Richard Fiesta spoke at a news conference with Sens. Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren and Reps. John Larson and Debbie Dingell announcing the new bicameral Expand Social Security Caucus in September. The caucus is the largest on Capitol Hill, with more than 150 members, demonstrating the broad support for expanding earned Social Security benefits, a longtime priority of the Alliance.

At the caucus launch, Senator Sanders said that "at a time when millions of seniors are trying to survive on \$12,000 or \$13,000 a year, our job is not to cut Social Security. Our job is to expand Social Security so that everyone in America can retire with dignity and respect."

Representative Larson added, "Social Security is not an entitlement. It's the insurance that American workers have paid for. The members of this caucus will always fight for Social Security and the workers who have earned their benefits."

The caucus is committed to expanding Social Security, one of the most popular and successful government programs. Last year alone, Social Security lifted 22 million Americans, including more than 15 million seniors, out of poverty. Before Social Security, nearly half of the nation's seniors were living in poverty.

The Alliance is pressing all senators and members of Congress to join the caucus. Alliance activists have sent more than 20,000 messages to their elected officials urging them to join and will step up our efforts when the new Congress convenes in January.

Protecting Seniors from Financial Fraud and Scams

Five million older Americans are financially exploited every year, and experts believe the losses total \$37 billion annually (*Bloomberg*, May 3, 2018).

To help educate consumers on ways to protect themselves from financial fraud, the Alliance has continued its partnership with the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA). FINRA produces engaging, substantive information about typical threats, and ways that consumers can avoid becoming a victim of scams or fraud.

Local Alliance leaders use the FINRA materials to take the messages directly to our members and the community at large. In 2018, we shared the fraud prevention messages and materials with thousands of retirees in communities across the country.



Organizational Highlights



Welcome, Mississippi!

The Alliance welcomed its 37th state chapter in October with the chartering of the Mississippi Alliance for Retired Americans. State Senator Sollie Norwood, President of the American Federation of Teachers-Mississippi Geraldine Bender and President of the Mississippi A. Philip Randolph Institute John Graves all addressed the founding convention.

National Membership Meeting

Nearly 400 retiree activists took Las Vegas by storm in November for the Alliance's quadrennial national membership meeting.

Robert Roach, Jr., was re-elected to a four-year term as President, Joseph Peters, Jr., was re-elected to serve four more years as Secretary-Treasurer and Jo Etta Brown was re-elected Executive Vice President.

Members heard speakers including Pulitzer Prize winner David Cay Johnston, an expert on taxes and pensions; Nolan Harrison, senior director of Former Player Services of the National Football

League Players Association; Nancy Altman, an expert on Social Security and pensions and the President of Social Security Works and the Alliance's officers and leadership.

A special panel on best practices for intergenerational outreach and activism featured 100-year-old Illinois Alliance board member Bea Lumpkin; Lakesia Collins, an organizer for SEIU-HCIIMK (Health Care Illinois-Indiana-Missouri-Kansas); and Andrea J. Fonte Weaver, Founder and Executive Director of Bridges Together.

Members also passed resolutions on Social Security, Medicare for All, prescription drug price negotiation, voting rights, and income inequality and attended more than half a dozen workshops to improve their organizing, public speaking and advocacy skills and learn how to put those skills to work when they return to their communities.





It's About Freedom

Thousands of retirees and working people gathered in more than 25 cities across the country to stand up against attacks on unions and fight for the freedom to collectively bargain in the workplace.

The events came two days before the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in the case of *Janus v. AFSCME*. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled against unions in that case in June, delivering a major attack on workers' rights.

While the *Janus* case effectively makes the whole country "right-to-work" for public sector workers, workers continue to unite and fight for better pay, benefits and working conditions. In just one single week in 2018, more than 14,000 workers formed or joined a union. Many Alliance retirees know first-hand the difference a union makes and turned out to support active workers at protests and actions, including joining the historic and successful teacher walkouts in Arizona and West Virginia.

Members Fight to Keep Baltimore and Virginia Social Security Offices Open

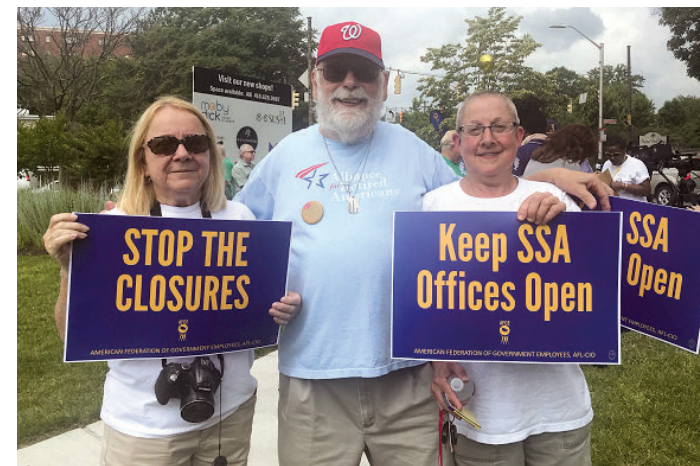
Alliance members joined American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) members and other allies at a rally in Baltimore on June 21 to protest the Social Security Administration's (SSA) plan to shut down the North Baltimore, Maryland local SSA field office. Maryland Alliance President Susan Flashman spoke at the event.

Executive Director Richard Fiesta joined AFGE President J. David Cox at a news conference in Alexandria, Virginia and spoke out about the importance of keeping its local Social Security office

open for retirees and people with disabilities. The event was covered by *The Washington Post*.

In late 2018 Congresswoman Gwen Moore introduced a bill to require the Social Security Administration to provide greater public notice and justification for any proposed office closures.

With 10,000 people turning 65 every day, the SSA should be opening hiring additional staff and opening new offices, not closing existing ones.



Fighting for Earned Pension Benefits

Alliance members and allies held a rally in Columbus, Ohio in July to bring attention to the growing pension crisis, and its effect on millions of Americans.

The rally preceded bi-partisan field hearing chaired by Ohio Senators Sherrod Brown and Rob Portman to take testimony from retirees whose pension benefits are at risk.

About 130 multiemployer pension plans, which are supposed to provide benefits to 1.3 million Americans are projected to reach insolvency within the next twenty years. Without Congressional action, by 2025 the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) insurance trust fund for multiemployer pension plans will also be insolvent.



Congress created a special bipartisan committee tasked with finding a solution to the pension crisis and ensuring workers' hard-earned benefits are paid in full. By the end of November, the committee was tasked to find a solution that would avoid the bankruptcy of both underfunded multiemployer pension plans and the PBGC. That deadline has now passed and the Committee has not reached a consensus solution.

Retirees Help Deliver Victory as Missouri Voters Defeat Harmful "Right to Work" Proposition

Proposition A, an anti-union "right to work" measure, was soundly defeated by Missouri voters by 67% of the electorate.

Missouri Alliance members were involved in the two-year effort to overturn anti-worker legislation passed by the state's legislature in 2017, helping to secure enough signatures to put the measure on the statewide ballot and then working to educate and turn out voters to defeat the measure.

Proposition A was deeply unpopular with both Democrats and Republicans. Analysis of the final vote showed that only about half of the Republicans who cast a ballot supported Proposition A and more than 330,000 Republicans split from their party to support unions and worker freedom.

In so-called right-to-work states, workers and families experience lower wages, wider gender wage gaps, stagnant job growth, and other worker inequality issues. The laws also negatively affect workers' retirements with employers opting to eliminate pensions and reduce health benefits.



Election 2018

Retiree vote key

Older Americans are the most reliable voters, showing up at the polls in large numbers in every election. In a midterm election, like 2018, seniors have outsized importance. A candidate who can win a majority of voters over the age of 65 has a strong chance of being elected.

In recent elections, a majority of senior voters have supported Republican candidates. However in 2016 older voters were the only age group to vote more Democratic than they had four years earlier, suggesting that their votes in 2018 could be up for grabs.

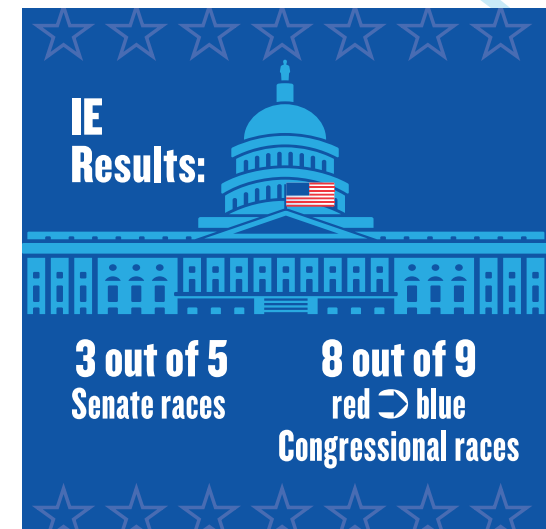
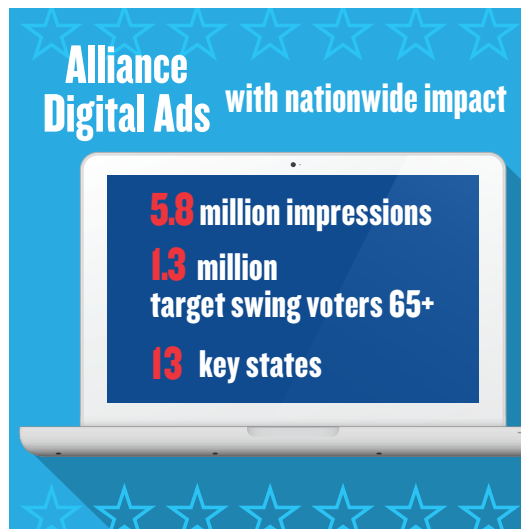
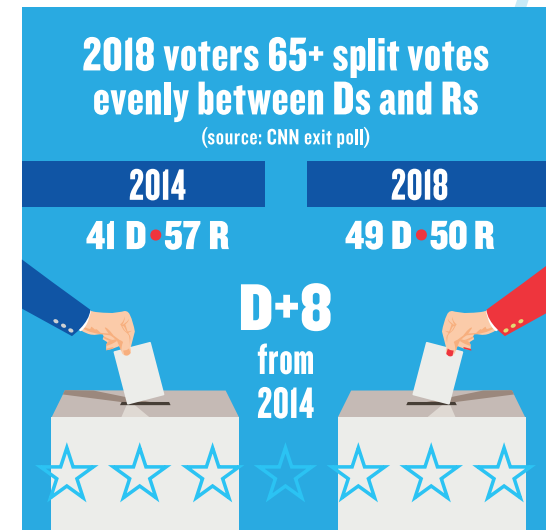
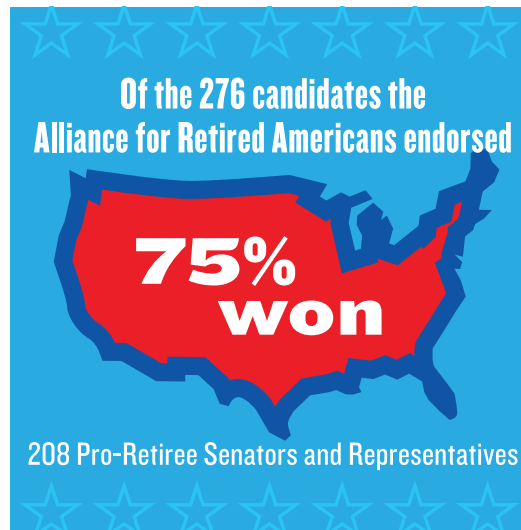
The Alliance noticed this shift and, combined with the public polling showing voters were concerned with Social Security, Medicare, prescription drug prices and protection for people with pre-existing health conditions, believed that a focus on older voters AND retirement security could lead to a strong Democratic performance in 2018.

This informed the Alliance's special and midterm election political program

Alliance program

The election of Conor Lamb to the vacant 18th congressional district in western Pennsylvania was the first test of the Alliance's strategy. Pennsylvania Alliance members played a critical role in the large Labor GOTV program, and the Alliance also ran a digital independent expenditure ad campaign contrasting Conor Lamb and Ron Saccone's records on Social Security and Medicare.

Candidate Lamb made retiree issues a central issue focus of his own message and advertising in contrast to his opponent who





voiced support for the Paul Ryan "entitlement cut" policies.

Lamb's election proved that retirement and health security was an issue that resonated with all voters, and deepened the Alliance's confidence in its 2018 approach.

The Alliance endorsed 276 candidates for the U.S. House and Senate. Thirty candidates held campaign events with Alliance members, and we sent more than 40,000 emails to our members regarding endorsed candidates.

Of course, Alliance members did more than vote. They made thousands of phone calls to seniors in support of pro-retiree candidates, knocked on prospective voters' doors, and organized friends and neighbors to vote. Letters were sent to more than 160,000 Alliance members in key states and congressional districts, comparing the candidates on retiree issues and urging them to vote for the pro-retiree candidates.

The Alliance also ran an independent expenditure campaign aimed at persuading and turning out independent and women voters aged 50 and above. Our campaign included digital and radio advertising during October and November in closely contested Senate and House races. The Alliance-supported candidate won in 79% of these campaigns (three of five Senate and eight of nine House contests).

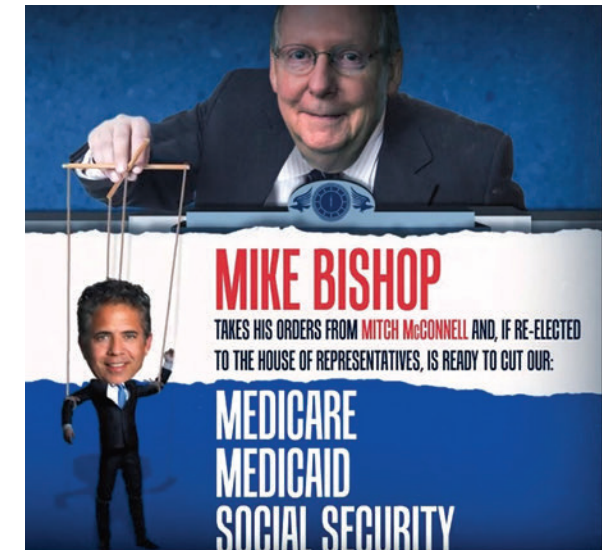
Results

Seventy-five percent of Alliance-endorsed candidates were elected, including 26 pro-retiree candidates who won a seat previously held by a Republican.

As predicted, the senior vote was decisive. National exit polls indicate that senior voters evenly split their vote between Democrats and Republican candidates, a 12-point swing from 2014.

This was sufficient to enable Democrats to win a majority of House seats and pick up or hold Senate seats in Arizona, Montana, Nevada, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

The lessons the Alliance learned about organizing, communicating and getting older voters to the polls will inform our political activities in future elections.





To explore ways to partner with the Alliance, please contact Richard Fiesta, Executive Director.



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