

FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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Medicare Drug Price Negotiation Bill Reintroduced in House

On Thursday, Rep. **Lloyd Doggett** (D-TX) announced the reintroduction of the Medicare Negotiation and Competitive Licensing Act, H.R. 1046, in the House of Representatives. [The bill would](#) empower the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate prescription drug prices under Medicare Part D. Senators **Sherrod Brown** (D-OH) and **Amy Klobuchar** (D-MN) are championing a similar bill, S. 377, in the Senate.



Rep. Lloyd Doggett's press conference

A number of representatives, senators, and Alliance members joined Rep. Doggett at the [press conference](#), including Sen.

Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Sen. **Brown**, Rep. **Mark Pocan** (D-WI), and Rep. **Peter Welch** (D-MA).

Each representative shared stories of constituents struggling to pay for their medicines.

“Retirees cannot wait any longer for aggressive action to address exorbitant prescription drug prices.

Congressman Doggett’s is one of several measures that would help to ensure that Americans don’t have to choose between financial security and their life-saving medicine,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “Congress must listen to the people and pass legislation to lower prescription drug prices now.”

Alliance Statement on the Passing of Rep. John Dingell (D-MI)

Alliance Executive Director **Richard Fiesta** released the following statement Thursday, on behalf of the Alliance.

“Retirees today lost one of their most loyal friends and steadfast allies. John Dingell was not only the longest-serving member of Congress in U.S. history but also a uniquely effective legislator. Retirees are especially grateful for his work advancing the goal of high quality, affordable health care for all Americans, particularly seniors and people with disabilities.



Alliance staff members Brendan Kelly and Eva Dominguez with Rep. Lloyd Doggett



Congressman John Dingell with then-Alliance President George J. Kourpias, then-Alliance Secretary-Treasurer Ruben Burks and former UAW President Owen Bieber at the 2006 Alliance National Convention.

“At the beginning of every Congress, Representative Dingell introduced a bill providing for a national health insurance system, the same bill that his father proposed while he was in Congress. He was instrumental in the creation of Medicare in 1965 and remained one of its biggest champions for his entire career. In recognition of his work to establish the Medicare program, Congressman Dingell was given the honor of presiding over the House of Representatives when the Medicare bill was passed. Later that year, he accompanied President Lyndon Johnson to the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library to witness the bill being signed into law. Fifty years later, Alliance members celebrated that transformational event with John Dingell. He brought the gavel he used in 1965 to the event.

“Congressman Dingell also successfully fought multiple efforts to privatize both Social Security and Medicare over the years, ensuring older Americans’ earned retirement benefits were protected.”

“The Alliance for Retired Americans was honored to have Representative Dingell address our members in 2006 and we presented him with our Leadership Award for his work on behalf of retirees. Whether in his home district in Michigan or in Washington, D.C., he was always gracious and welcoming to our members when they discussed retiree issues with him.

“On behalf of our 4.4 million members, the Alliance extends our deepest condolences to Representative Debbie Dingell and the entire Dingell family.”

Prescription Drug Prices in State of the Union Address

Ahead of Tuesday night’s State of the Union speech, Executive Director Richard Fiesta issued a statement [detailing](#) the retiree issues that the President should have focused on, including addressing prescription drug prices and amending the proposed NAFTA 2.0 treaty.

President Trump mentioned the [rising costs of prescription drug prices](#) and briefly discussed his administration’s work to address the problem. He noted the disparity between what Americans and people in other countries pay for the same medication and urged Congress to take action. His Administration’s proposal, however, is unlikely to bring down costs to U.S. consumers. He also did not call for allowing Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices and made a misleading statement that drug prices fell by a large margin in 2018. Experts say this claim is a cherry-picked data point, as it only applies to a specific measurement called the consumer price index for drugs, not the list prices that patients pay.

“The President praised the USCMA--the so-called NAFTA 2.0--without mentioning that the agreement, as written, will lock in high prices for many drugs, and delay the introduction of generic options for name-brand drugs,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Alliance Executive Director.



Alliance Loses A Friend in Julie Harbin

[Julie Elizabeth Harbin](#), founding president of the South Carolina Alliance for Retired Americans, passed away on January 24, 2019, after a long battle with cancer. She was elected to the Alliance’s Community Advocacy Network (CAN) Board in 2010 and served as the President of the South Carolina Alliance until 2012.

“Julie will be missed. We are grateful to her commitment to retiree issues and we extend our deep condolences to her family,” said Richard Fiesta.

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.