FRIDAY ALERT

Administration Moves to Erase the Affordable Care Act as it Turns Nine Years Old

On Monday the Administration officially threw its support behind Judge **Reed O'Connor**'s December ruling that the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is unconstitutional. O'Connor, the Texas federal district court judge presiding over the *Texas v. Azar* suit concluded that the entire law should be considered invalid because Congress eliminated the individual mandate. The Justice Department has refused to defend the law, and legal experts expect the case to reach the Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, the House of Representatives is trying to strengthen the Affordable Care Act with a new package of legislation. The proposals would lower the cost of premiums, ban "junk" insurance, and bolster protections for people with pre-existing conditions. More than 20 percent of Americans say that continuing these protections and lowering prescription drug prices should be top priorities for Congress, according to a Kaiser Family Foundation poll, and healthcare is already shaping up to be an important issue for the 2020 presidential election.

Since President Obama signed the ACA, the law has extended coverage to over 20 million Americans and resulted in a significant increase in employer-based plans, with roughly seven million people gaining that kind of coverage between 2013 and 2017. It has also provided important protections for people with pre-existing conditions, which helped over 50 million Americans, particularly seniors. More than 80% of people between the ages of 55 to 64 reported having at least one pre-existing condition in 2014.

President Obama signs the Affordable Care Act in 2010.

"By renewing their call to dismantle the Affordable Care Act, the Trump administration is once again threatening to decimate our health care system," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "Instead of working to lower prescription drugs and stabilize the marketplace, they are trying to rip coverage away from millions and strip protections from people with pre-existing conditions."

Senator Rubio Proposes Paid Family Leave Plan that Would Drain Social Security Benefits

On Wednesday, Senator **Marco Rubio** revived a proposal for paid family leave, which he first introduced last year.

The Rubio bill would allow parents to pay for parental leave by dipping into their future Social Security benefits. This would deplete the Social Security Trust Fund, and also require any person who claimed these funds to be forced to delay their retirement.

It is unclear how Senator Rubio's plan would affect people who receive disability and/or survivors' benefits, but the larger problems for Social Security would definitely hurt these beneficiaries. Experts also point out that the plan treats Social Security like a private account instead of social insurance that should protect everyone, which could make it a useful first step for privatizing earned benefits.

"A majority of Americans want paid family leave, but trading a secure retirement is the wrong way to go about it," said **Robert Roach, Jr., President of the Alliance.** "This bill should never be enacted."

VIDEO: 2020 Budget Proposal Exposes President Trump's Lies About Protecting Social Security and Medicare

In light of President **Donald Trump**'s 2020 budget proposal, the Democratic Party released a new video highlighting all the times he promised to protect earned benefits. President Trump repeatedly said he would protect Medicare and Social Security from cuts on the campaign trail.

But the President's 2020 budget proposal slashes a whopping $845 billion from Medicare, $25 billion from Social Security, and $1.5 trillion from Medicaid over the next ten years. After passing tax cuts for the wealthy and raising the federal deficit in 2017, key Republicans made it clear that they would use the increase as a smokescreen for cutting "entitlements." President Trump's budget confirms this scheme, as working Americans and retirees are the ones footing the bill.

"The president's budget would be disastrous for workers, seniors, and the middle class," said **Joseph Peters, Secretary-Treasurer** of the Alliance. "Instead of pulling the rug out from under vulnerable Americans, we should be expanding earned benefits and making sure that everyone can have a secure retirement and access to good, quality health care."

From Kaiser Health News

Analysis: Why Americans Shouldn't Feel Grateful For $137 Insulin

Eli Lilly and Co. announced with some fanfare that it was manufacturing a generic version of its own best-selling insulin brand, Humalog, which it would sell for half off — $137.35 versus about $275.

David Ricks, the chief executive of Lilly, said the company was making this seemingly beneficent gesture because "many patients are struggling to afford their insulin."

But they're struggling, in large part, because since 2001 Lilly has [raised the price of a vial of Humalog](#) to about $275, from $35. Other insulin makers have raised prices similarly.

[Read the full story here.](#)

Minnesota Alliance Holds Its Founding Convention

The Minnesota Alliance held its founding convention as a 501(c)4 organization in Minneapolis on Wednesday and Thursday. The new officers are: **Michael Madden** (IAM), President; **Virginia Stark** (CAN), Treasurer; and **Bruce Yernburg** (OPEIU), Secretary.

Minnesota Alliance convention attendees

Dan Mikel, former Minnesota Alliance 501(c)3 president, accepted the title of President Emeritus. Proceedings included video remarks from Alliance President Robert Roach and a birthday cake made by members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers' International Union (BCTGM).

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.