

FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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Alliance Releases 2018 Annual Congressional Voting Record

On Thursday the Alliance released its [2018 Congressional Voting Record](#) scoring each U.S. Senator and Representative's votes on critical retirement security issues.

"Most politicians say they care about seniors on the campaign trail, but our Voting Record shows whether they keep the needs of retirees front and center after they are elected," said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. "The Voting Record will help our 4.4 million members and all voters hold their elected officials accountable for the votes they take."

The annual report reviewed 10 key Senate and House votes affecting the health and well-being of retirees. It includes votes affecting Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, provisions of the 2010 Affordable Care Act, prescription drug prices, election security, protections for the disabled, and tax cuts that disproportionately harm seniors.

Forty-two members of the U.S. Senate and 123 members of the U.S. House of Representatives achieved perfect scores of 100% in 2018. Since the Voting Record covers votes in 2018, newly elected members and senators are not included.

"The last Congress took little action to ensure retirement security for all Americans," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "Retirees, who vote in the greatest numbers, helped elect a new majority to the U.S. House of Representatives. Retirees will be watching to see if pro-retiree policies are championed with a new party in the majority."

The voting records for each of the 50 state Congressional delegations can be downloaded [here](#).

House Passes Legislation to Rein in Prescription Drug Prices, Block Sabotage of the Affordable Care Act

House Democrats introduced legislation that included several proposals to reverse the Administration's attempts to undermine the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and also lower prescription drug costs. The Alliance sent a [letter](#) to the Hill on Wednesday supporting the legislation, which was voted on as one bill Thursday night.

H.R. 987, the "Strengthening Health Care and Lowering Prescription Drug Costs Act," passed by a vote of [234-183](#).



H.R. 987 will block some of the most harmful elements of the Administration's sabotage of the ACA, including making it more difficult to sell short-term insurance plans. Short-term insurance plans provide inadequate health coverage and destabilize the health care exchanges. The legislation also improves the ACA's outreach and enrollment support, which helps more Americans secure health insurance.

Democrats announced the legislation at a press conference on Wednesday.

In addition, the bill provides funds to create state health exchanges. Combined, these measures will help stabilize the marketplace and reduce health care costs for individuals with pre-existing conditions, including more than 5 million older Americans 50 to 64 years old who purchase health insurance on the exchange.

The bill helps lower the high cost of prescription drugs by making it easier for generics to enter the market. Currently, drug corporations use delaying tactics to keep generics out of the market. For example, corporations refuse to make brand-name samples of their drug available to generic manufacturers for testing. Also, generic companies that have marketing rights to sell a drug often park their "exclusivity," extending the amount of time before other generic versions can enter the market. H.R. 987 will help remove these barriers, reducing drug costs for millions of Americans.

The prescription drug provisions are generally bipartisan, with Sen. **Chuck Grassley** (R-IA) endorsing several. However, some Republicans remained so committed to gutting the ACA that they voted against the bill even though bringing down drug costs [is a top priority of many voters](#).

"We applaud the House leadership for passing this important legislation," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "They were able to do so despite some nay-sayers, who sought to repay their drug corporation campaign donors by stopping the bill's passage. We must now get the Senate to follow the example that has been set."

Wisconsin Alliance Holds its Annual Meeting

Wisconsin State Treasurer **Sarah Godlewski**, state AFL-CIO President **Stephanie Bloomingdale**, Wisconsin Democracy Campaign Executive Director **Matt Rothschild**, Citizen Action Executive Director **Robert Kraig**, and national Alliance Field Manager **Maureen Dunn** all spoke at the Wisconsin Alliance's annual meeting in Madison on Wednesday. Some of the important topics discussed included Pensions for All, Medicaid expansion, and reforming gerrymandered voter districts.



Attendees at the Wisconsin Alliance meeting on Wednesday

Nevada Alliance Members James and Heather Booker Share their Experience with Outrageous Prescription Drug Prices

This week, the Alliance continues its series of sharing personal stories from our members highlighting key retiree issues. Today, we feature Nevada Alliance members **James** and **Heather Booker** of Las Vegas, Nevada as they tell how sky-high prescription drug prices have added to their stress while they battle James' cancer together.

James has lung cancer and had to pay \$1,500 per month out of pocket for his drugs when he reached the doughnut hole. His total income at that time was about \$1,800 per month. His wife Heather has been left with too little money to afford her own asthma medication after helping James pay for his medicine. They spent time researching grants to help with their costs but found they did not meet the specific criteria.

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.