

FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

815 16th Street, NW, Fourth Floor • Washington, DC 20006 • 202.637.5399

www.retiredamericans.org

Spanish version: www.alianzadejubilados.org

May 31, 2019

Connecticut's New \$15 Minimum Wage is a Boost for Workers and Retirees

Connecticut lawmakers have [passed](#) a bill that will raise the state's minimum wage from \$10.10 per hour to \$15 per hour over the next five years. Connecticut will join six other states that have implemented a \$15 minimum wage -- California, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York as well as Washington, D.C. -- once the bill is signed into law.

A higher minimum wage does more than offset current workers' rising costs of living. Every additional dollar earned by people translates into higher Social Security tax receipts and strengthens the Trust Fund. Higher wages now mean more earned benefits in retirement.

[Thirty-nine percent](#) of retirees would be below the official poverty line without Social Security, and those with minimum wage jobs have an increased likelihood of being in that 39%.

"Nearly 2 million Americans work in jobs that pay minimum wage," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "Raising the minimum wage to \$15 is a step toward greater retirement security for all of us."

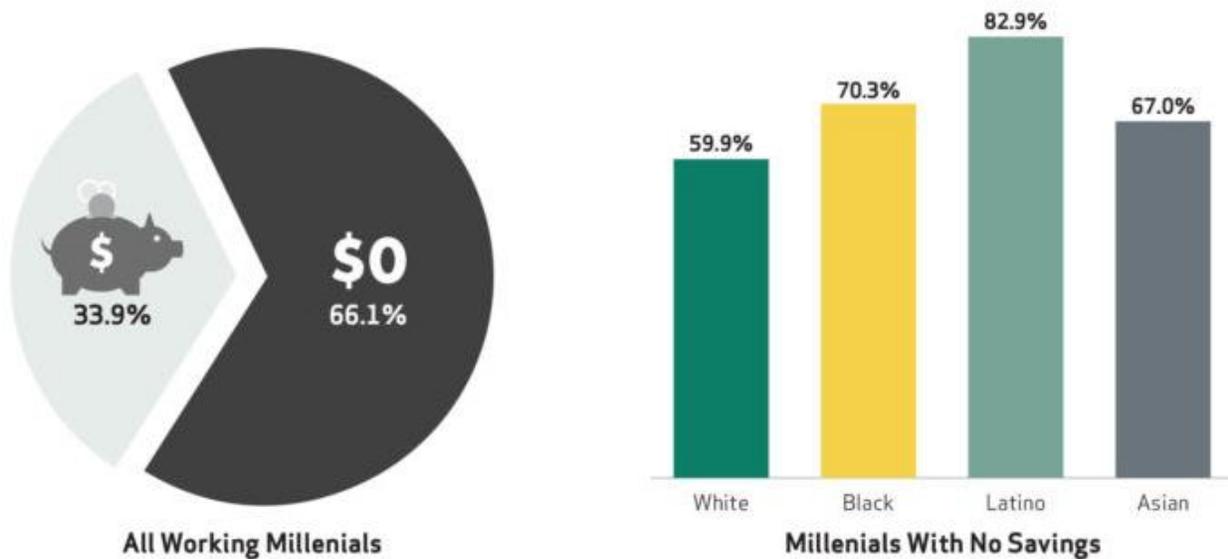
Young People are Not Saving for Retirement - Some Blame Climate Change

According to a [report](#) by the National Institute on Retirement Security, 66% of Americans between the ages of 21 and 32 have nothing saved for retirement. While some young people say "they can't save what they don't earn," [many](#) say they are cynical about saving due to the looming threat of climate change.

Millennials are more likely than those before them to believe that climate change will have an impact on their lives. They claim that depressing news stories and current events make them skeptical about the future once they reach retirement age.

"Scientists agree that global warming is a major concern, but young people still need to plan for a secure retirement," said Alliance President **Robert Roach, Jr.** "Tell your grandchildren that at current savings rates, [85% of millennials won't be able to retire comfortably](#). We must also recruit younger people to fight for traditional pensions and expanded Social Security benefits, both of which are essential."

Figure 16: **Two-Thirds of Working Millennials Have Nothing (\$0) Saved for Retirement**



Source: Author's calculations using 2014 Survey of Income and Program and Participation SSA Supplement Data.

Two Members of Congress Ran on Reducing Drug Prices, but Abandoned Pledge

Representatives **Dan Crenshaw** of Texas and **Pete Stauber** of Minnesota were among a handful of Republicans on the 2018 campaign trail who supported plans allowing Medicare to negotiate drug prices. However, they [abandoned](#) this promise only months after they were sworn into Congress.

Pollster **Geoff Garin** believes that this will not bode well for the two Congressmen when they seek reelection in 2020. Voters may believe that they “succumbed to the money and influence of the drug manufacturers, which creates a double-whammy -- being wrong on the issue and an appearance of corruption.”

Some prescription drug proposals have garnered bipartisan support, but many Republicans remain committed to halting proposals that jeopardize pharmaceutical corporations' hefty profits. Voters say that bringing down drug prices is a top priority, and [they are angry it hasn't happened](#).

“Medicare price negotiation would be a gigantic step in the right direction,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “It’s disheartening to see any politicians who once supported it reverse course.”

Earlier this month, House Democrats passed H.R. 987, the “Strengthening Health Care and Lowering Prescription Drug Costs Act,” legislation that included several provisions to lower prescription drug costs and also reverse the Administration’s attempts to undermine the Affordable Care Act (ACA).



Rep. Pete Stauber (MN) ran on Medicare negotiation but reversed his position once elected

Alliance Members Meet with Lawmakers during Older Americans Month



(L-R) Frances Greene, Jocelyn Bryant, Rep. Alma Adams, North Carolina Alliance State President Bill Dworkin and Field Organizer Heather McLaughlin

May is Older Americans Month, and Alliance members across the country have been commemorating it by visiting their elected officials to talk about prescription drug prices, Medicare and Social Security. Meetings have taken place or been scheduled with **Sen. Ron Wyden (OR)** and **Reps. Colin Allred (TX-32), Cheri Bustos (IL-17), Alma Adams (NC-12), David Price (NC-04), Donna Shalala (FL-27), Marc Veasey (TX-33) and Susan Wild (PA-07).**

Adult Vaccines: What You Should Know

With measles outbreaks in the news, public health care advocates have renewed their focus on vaccinations for children. But staying up to date on vaccines is also an issue for all adults, including retirees.

Dr. Mara Gordon, a family physician, [reminds us](#) that adults should think about their own vaccine history. For instance, adults who received the mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine as a child are considered immune to measles for life, and there is no need to be revaccinated to be immune to modern measles.

However, older adults and immunosuppressed people are susceptible to shingles, a painful rash that is a result of the chickenpox virus. An effective two-dose vaccine called Shingrix is recommended for patients over the age of 50, but there is a shortage of this vaccine. The vaccine's creator, GlaxoSmithKline, says that it will increase production in the future to keep up with demand.

Adults need booster tetanus shots every ten years, and people over the age of 65 should receive a Tdap booster, which includes vaccines that prevent tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (aka Whooping Cough). This additional pertussis vaccine is useful when visiting people with weakened immune systems, including infants and older, hospitalized adults. Doctors may also recommend vaccines for pneumonia and meningitis for adults.

Adults should get the Hepatitis A vaccine, especially if they fall into any [category](#) at risk of contracting the disease. Immunity to Hepatitis B decreases over time, even if an adult received a vaccine for it when it was first available in the 1980's. A doctor may recommend revaccination.

There is no vaccine available to protect against Hepatitis C.

“It is vital that older adults know how to protect their health,” summarized **President Roach**.
“Vaccines are an important part of that.”

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.