

FRIDAY ALERT



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Congress Votes to Raise the Federal Minimum Wage to \$15

40 million Americans, including nearly 6 million workers over the age of 55, are one step closer to getting a much needed raise. On Thursday, Congress [passed](#) H.R. 582, the Raise the Wage Act, with a vote of [231 to 199](#). If passed by the Senate and signed by the President, it would raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 by 2025.

The minimum wage has not increased in ten years and is today \$7.25.

Since then the purchasing power of the minimum wage has [decreased by 17%](#) and cost workers over \$3,000 in annual earnings due to inflation.

Raising the wage will also help older Americans and retirees. Higher wages would provide more payroll tax revenue and bolster the Social Security Trust Fund for current and future retirees.

“Millions of working Americans, including seniors, are struggling to survive. No one should be forced to work upwards of 60 hours a week or have multiple jobs just to make ends meet and keep food on the table,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “This increase is long overdue. Let’s thank the House and tell the Senate it’s time to move it now.”

Bipartisan Bill to End Tax on Employer-Provided Insurance Passes the House by an Overwhelming Margin

The House of Representatives [passed H.R. 748](#), the Middle Class Health Benefits Tax Repeal Act, which repeals a tax on employer-provided health care plans on Wednesday by a vote of [419-6](#).

Lawmakers originally included the excise tax, sometimes referred to as the “Cadillac Plan Tax,” in the Affordable Care Act (ACA). If it goes into effect, employers would be required to pay a [40% tax on private health care plans](#) which exceed \$11,200 for individual coverage and \$30,100 for family coverage.

Experts predicted that 75 percent of employer plans would have been affected and expected employers to increase premiums and deductibles or reduce health coverage to avoid paying the tax. Employees and retirees would have been saddled with higher costs and less coverage than they have today.

Congress has twice voted to delay implementation of the tax, which was to take effect in 2022. Now, the Senate will have a chance to consider full repeal.

“Taxing 181 million Americans’ health insurance benefits puts people’s hard-won, employer based insurance at risk.” said **Robert Roach Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “We’ve fought hard for this repeal for years, and are pressing the Senate to follow suit.”

Health Insurers Overcharged Medicare By Billions; Government Pledging Action

A new analysis shows that several Medicare Advantage plan administrators [have overcharged Medicare](#) by almost \$30 billion over the past three years.

Administrators falsified patients’ illnesses or procedures to get more money when they billed the Center of Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

Eliminating fraud boosts the solvency of the Medicare Trust Fund. After several years of delay, officials are working on plans to finally hold these insurers accountable. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) says it’s beefing up its audit systems so they can investigate more effectively and recoup unauthorized payments.

“Our earned Medicare benefits shouldn’t be put at risk by unscrupulous operators,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “Stopping fraud is essential for taxpayers and retirees. CMS needs to do a much better job overseeing these insurance corporations and Congress should hold them accountable.”

ALERT: New Scam Targeting Medicare Beneficiaries

Scammers are calling Medicare beneficiaries and offering them free genetic testing. If the retiree is interested, the thieves ask for the person’s Medicare number, which can be used to steal their identity or file false benefit claims on their behalf.



Medicare experts [caution](#) that seniors should never offer private information over the phone.

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) [has some tips](#) for seniors on how to approach genetic testing offers and protect themselves:

- Do not accept genetic testing unless it was ordered by a doctor. If a testing kit is sent to you, send it back and keep track of the sender’s name and the date.
- A trustworthy physician is the only one who should approve any request for free genetic testing.
- No one outside of your physician’s office should have your Medicare number.
- Contact the HHS OIG Hotline if you suspect any case of Medicare fraud: 1-800-447-8477 or oig.hhs.gov/fraud/hotline