

FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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Alliance Commemorates Social Security's 84th Anniversary

Wednesday, August 14th, was Social Security's 84th birthday. Alliance members marked the event with calls to make wealthy Americans pay their fair share into the program so it can be strengthened and expanded for current and future generations.



Rep. Grijalva and Executive Director Fiesta at the Arizona Alliance event



Florida Alliance members at anniversary event in Tallahassee

On Tuesday, Arizona Alliance members hosted Rep. **Raul Grijalva** and Alliance Executive Director **Richard Fiesta** at their ninth annual Social Security anniversary celebration in Tucson.

In Tallahassee, FLARA President **Bill Sauers** and Secretary **Barbara DeVane**, spoke about the program's importance and emphasized the need to "[Cut the cake, not Social Security](#)." They called attention to Rep. **Neal Dunn's** 5% lifetime pro-retiree voting record and Sen. **Marco Rubio's** 9% and celebrated the 95% lifetime score of Rep. **Al Lawson**.



A celebratory cake served at the Washington State Alliance anniversary

Rep. **Adam Smith** (WA) addressed Washington State Alliance members at their Summer Celebration Educational Forum in Des Moines, Washington. In Nebraska, State AFL-CIO President/Secretary Treasurer **Sue Martin**, Omaha Federation of Labor President state senator **Mike McDonnell**, Alliance state President **Al Mumm** and candidates for Nebraska's 2nd District Congressional seat all spoke.

Alliance members in Ohio traveled to Rep. **Troy Balderson's** (OH) office to urge him to support Social Security expansion. Last week the Texas Alliance held anniversary events and presented Retiree Hero Awards to Reps. **Sheila Jackson Lee** and **Al Green** (accepted by staffer **Crystal Webster**) for their 100% voting records on issues important to retirees.

"We must expand and protect Social Security," said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. "Rep. **Linda Sanchez** of California has introduced a bill, H.R. 2654, that would accomplish this by lifting payroll tax caps, making sure that the wealthy pay their fair share, and seeing to it that Social Security remains solvent for generations to come." Please read our new [fact sheet](#) for the latest on proposals to expand Social Security.



Nebraska Alliance President Al Mumm addresses anniversary event attendees

Action Needed: Tell Your Legislator to Put People Over Pharma Profits

Activists in 30 states will participate in a day of action Tuesday, August 20 to deliver a "prescription for lower drug prices" to Senators and members of Congress.

You can show solidarity by sending a message to your members. We must demand that passing legislation to lower drug prices be a top priority when lawmakers return to Washington in September. [Click here to send a message.](#)

"Nearly 1 in 4 older Americans say that they didn't fill a prescription in the last 12 months because they couldn't afford it," said Executive Director Rich Fiesta. "We must demand that our elected leaders put patients over Pharma profits. Older Americans can't wait any longer."

Our goal is for 15,000 people to send messages by Tuesday! Please help by [sending your message now.](#)

Medicare Recipients Sue to Appeal "Observation Status" Coverage Gaps

An important class action lawsuit began in federal court in Hartford, Connecticut on Monday. [Medicare patients are suing](#) to eliminate a policy that prevents them from receiving Medicare benefits for time spent in a hospital under so-called "observation care." Observation status refers to patients who are in hospital because their doctor thinks they are too sick to go home but not sick enough to be admitted.

These patients are required to pay hospital bills for observation care. They are also prevented from filing an appeal for insurance coverage. More than 1.3 million observation claims were tallied for the 10-year period through 2017.

Administration officials appear to be questioning the policy. **Seema Verma**, head of the Center for Medicare & Medicare Services said in a tweet "[Government] doesn't always make sense. We're listening to feedback."

Joseph Peters, Jr., Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance, said, "If the patients win this lawsuit, hundreds of thousands more could finally receive the benefits they should have had in the first

place. Instead of creating bureaucratic loopholes, the federal government should be focused on providing comprehensive coverage so that no Americans go bankrupt in order to get the care they need.”

Richard Fiesta Addresses A. Philip Randolph Institute

Last Friday, Executive Director **Fiesta** spoke at the A. Philip Randolph Institute’s 50th Annual National Education Conference in Minneapolis. He discussed the challenges that Social Security and Medicare currently face, stressing that Social Security expansion and lowering drug costs are especially important in the black community.

“Social Security provides 90 percent of the total income for 55% of African-American seniors,” said Mr. Fiesta. “While the program is vitally important for all communities, cuts to Social Security would disproportionately hurt African Americans.”

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.