



FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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Medicare Part B Premiums to Rise 7% In 2020

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has announced new premiums for Medicare beneficiaries, including a [7% increase in Part B premiums in 2020](#).

Premiums will rise to \$144.60 a month, up from \$135.50, for about 70% of beneficiaries. The announcement comes nearly a month after the Social Security Administration announced a modest 1.6% cost-of-living adjustment to Social Security benefits in 2020, which works out

to approximately \$24 a month for the average retired worker.

Medicare Part B 2020 premiums

Individual taxable income	Joint taxable income	Monthly premium
\$87,000 or less	\$174,000 or less	\$144.60
\$87,000 to \$109,000	\$174,000 to \$218,000	\$202.40
\$109,000 to \$136,000	\$218,000 to \$272,000	\$289.20
\$136,000 to \$163,000	\$272,000 to \$326,000	\$376.00
\$163,000 to \$500,000	\$326,000 to \$750,000	\$462.70
\$500,000 or above	\$750,000 and above	\$491.60

“For many Americans, their 2020 COLA will not be large enough to cover the increase in their Medicare premiums and out-of-pocket costs,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**,

Source: Medicare.gov

Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “We need to expand Social Security, increase benefits and ensure that COLAs reflect the cost of things that retirees spend their money on.”

Diabetes Day of Action Highlights Skyrocketing Insulin Prices

Alliance chapters joined faith leaders, people with diabetes, and other advocates to draw attention to the insulin cost crisis on World Diabetes Day, November 14, and call on Congress to take action.

Although Insulin has been used to treat diabetes since 1922, prescription drug corporations have tripled the price of the most widely used types of insulin over the last decade, and the price of some versions has increased by as much as 800 percent.

In Jacksonville, Florida Alliance members held a news conference to thank Rep. **Al Lawson** for co-sponsoring the [Lower Drug Costs Now Act, H.R. 3](#). The bill would require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate lower prices for insulin and hundreds of other high priced drugs for seniors and all Americans. At an action in Tucson, Arizona Alliance Vice President **Henry Trejo** called on Sen. **Martha McSally** to detail what policies she supports that would lower drug prices.

"World Diabetes Day reminds us that retirees can't wait. Drug costs are out of control, and we need action now," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "Alliance members must continue to demand that Congress take strong action by passing H.R. 3 without delay."

Tell Senator Mitt Romney -- No Fast Track to Social Security and Medicare Cuts!

It's one thing to propose cutting earned Social Security and Medicare benefits -- it is another to hide behind closed doors to get it done faster.

That's just what Senator Mitt Romney (UT) is trying to do. He recently introduced a bill, the TRUST ACT, that would "fast-track" proposals to make changes to Social Security and Medicare.

We need to stop this before it goes any further. Please [sign our petition and tell Congress to protect and expand our earned benefits](#), not cut them! Any discussion about the future of Social Security and Medicare should be done in the light of day so the American people can participate in the debate.

Rep. Neal Introduces Plan to Restore Social Security Benefits for Public Sector Workers

House Ways and Means Committee Chairman **Richard Neal** (MA) recently introduced the Public Servants Protection and Fairness Act (H.R. 4540), which would modify the Social Security windfall elimination provision (WEP) and restore earned retirement benefits to millions of Americans.

The WEP provision, which passed into law in 1983, claws back the Social Security benefits of people who worked for a period of time in public sector jobs not covered by Social Security. Twenty-five percent of public employees nationwide, or nearly 1.9 million retired federal, state and local government employees who worked as teachers, police, firefighters, postal workers and general employees, are affected by the WEP provisions. An [Alliance fact sheet](#) has additional details.

Unfortunately, the bill does not address the government pension offset (GPO), which affects the spouses and dependents of retired government workers. The GPO reduces the spousal or dependent benefits by two-thirds. The Alliance supports the elimination of the WEP and GPO clawbacks.

“This bill is a long-overdue and welcome development,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “Many Alliance members have been unfairly hurt by the WEP and GPO and we urge Congress to pass H.R. 4540 and then move to address the GPO.”

Alliance Chapters Hold Conventions in New Mexico and Vermont

The New Mexico Alliance for Retired Americans held their triennial convention on Saturday, November 2 at the IBEW Local Union 611 hall in Albuquerque NM. State Senator **Mimi Stewart**, a retired teacher, updated the convention on the legislature’s work on state pensions. New Mexico

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer **Ashley Long** expressed the importance of retirees in the labor movement.



Rep. **Ben Ray Lujan** (NM) was presented a Hero Award for his 100% voting record on retiree and senior issues, and **Dennis Conerty** was elected the New Mexico Alliance state president. **Elva Santos**, who had been president, stays on as treasurer. Alliance Field Mobilization Director **Brendan Kelly** spoke about national issues and swore in the new officers.

left to right: Elva Santos, Rep. Lujan, John Santos, Brendan Kelly



At the Vermont Alliance convention in Montpelier last Saturday, **Bruce Olsson** was elected the new state president. Mr. Olsson succeeds longtime Vermont Alliance President **Jane Osgatharp**.

Executive Director Fiesta traveled to Vermont for the event and spoke about Social Security expansion, H.R. 3 and the senior vote in 2020. Former Governor **Madeleine Kunin** also spoke at the event.

Former Vermont President Osgatharp (left) with former Governor Kunin on Saturday