

# FRIDAY ALERT



**Alliance for Retired Americans**

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## **Pension Security May Be in Sight for Thousands of Coal Miners**

Senate Majority Leader [Mitch McConnell \(KY\)](#) joined a bipartisan group of senators on [Wednesday](#) in introducing a bill to secure the pensions for nearly 90,000 retired coal miners. If passed, the bill would also secure health care for 12,000 retirees.

The Bipartisan American Miners Act, co-sponsored by McConnell and Sens. **Joe Manchin** and **Shelly Moore Capito** of West Virginia along with other senators from coal producing states, would transfer funds from the federal abandoned mine lands program to avert insolvency of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) pension plan.

Murray Energy, one of the country's largest coal mining companies, filed for bankruptcy last week, moving the expected insolvency date of the pension fund up to 2022 without legislative action. Eight other coal companies have filed for bankruptcy over the last two years.

“If enacted, this bill will be a major step in the right direction, bringing well-deserved financial relief to tens of thousands of miners and their families,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “We must pass this bill and then save other pension funds that are at great risk due to our nation’s retirement security emergency.”

## **White House Backing Off Medicare Drug Price Negotiation**

The Trump administration has indicated that it will support a Senate drug bill [that does not contain the landmark Medicare price negotiation provision included in H.R. 3](#), the Lower Drug Costs Now Act.



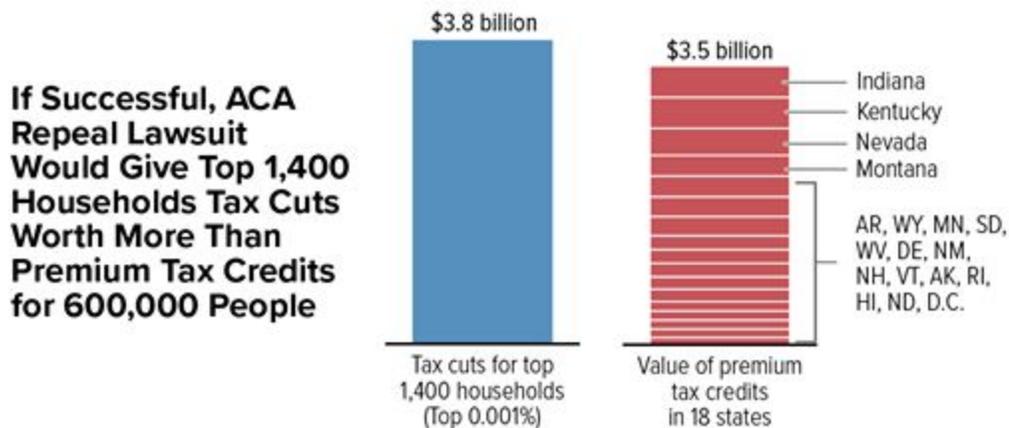
President **Trump** called for letting Medicare negotiate drug prices many times during his 2016 campaign. Now the administration has indicated it supports a Senate bill that is more modest than the House bill and does not include drug price negotiation. The Senate bill is co-sponsored by Sens. **Chuck Grassley (IA)** and **Ron Wyden (OR)**.

“The federal government should be using every tool at its disposal to lower drug prices for the American people and negotiation is the strongest one we’ve got,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “The federal government negotiates prices for goods and services every day — prescription drugs should be negotiated, too. We know it works because Medicaid and the VA already negotiate on behalf of patients and taxpayers.”

House Speaker **Nancy Pelosi’s** bill would allow the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate lower prices for up to 250 drugs per year, with the lower prices also applied to private insurers. The Grassley-Wyden bill does not include negotiation and would not lower prices for people with private insurance.

### The Rich Get Richer if ACA is Overturned

The wealthiest Americans will likely receive [billions in tax cuts if the Affordable Care Act \(ACA\) is overturned](#), according to an [analysis published Monday by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#), a Washington think tank.



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The nation’s wealthiest 0.001%, the 1,409 U.S. households with annual incomes over \$53 million, would receive a combined \$3.8 billion in tax cuts if the law is overturned, according to the report.

Overturning the ACA would eliminate several taxes that help pay for the law’s expansion, including a 0.9% Medicare tax on single Americans who earn more than \$200,000 a year and couples who make \$250,000.

Drug corporations would also benefit, since the ACA collects an annual fee on the sale of brand name drugs.

“It is outrageous that millions of Americans will be hurt if the ACA is repealed or struck down by the courts — and the richest Americans will receive a massive windfall,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “This is cruel and contrary to our values.”

A federal appeals court in New Orleans is expected to issue a decision soon on a lower court ruling that overturned the ACA, in the case of Texas vs. the United States.

### **Alliance Celebrates the Nation's 101st Veterans Day**

Monday is Veterans Day, originally observed on Nov. 11, 1919, which was the first anniversary of the end of World War I. The holiday now commemorates veterans of all wars.

"Thank you to all of our Alliance members who have served our country when we needed them most," said **President Roach**. "We owe them a debt of gratitude regardless of where and when they served."

### **Maryland/DC Alliance Holds its Convention**

Rep. **Jamie Raskin** (MD) spoke at the Maryland/DC Alliance convention in Lanham, MD on Saturday. **Eva Dominguez**, Legislative Representative for the Alliance, gave a presentation about national retiree issues including Social Security expansion and lowering prescription drug prices.



Newly-elected and re-elected Maryland/DC Alliance board members gathered on Saturday.

The following officers were elected: **Susan Flashman** (IBEW), President; **Daisy Fields** (AFSCME), Treasurer; **Jenny Sylvester** (CWA), Secretary; **Dick Bissell** (IBEW), 1st Vice President; and **Louis McLaughlin** (IBT), 2nd Vice President.

**Pamela Parker** (IBEW); **Josephine Ball** (AFSCME); **Les Bayless** (SEIU); **Roger Blacklow** (National Capitol Area Union); and **Donald Morris** (City Union of Baltimore) were elected Trustees.