



FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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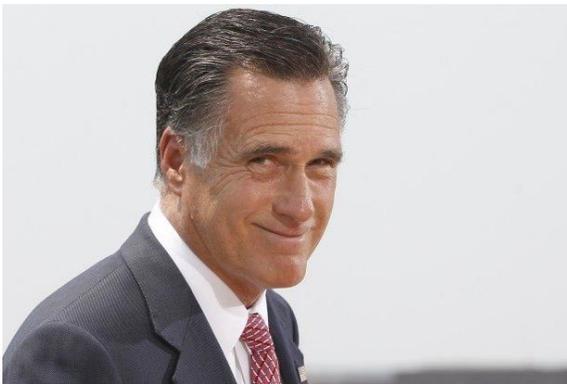
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January 31, 2020

Mitt Romney's Plan to Gut Social Security and Medicare Through the TRUST Act Advances

The Senate Homeland Security Committee held a hearing on the TRUST Act, proposed by **Sen. Mitt Romney** (UT), this week. The bill is [an attempt to gut](#) earned benefits by creating a closed-door and fast-tracked process.



The stated goal of this bipartisan legislation is to address the solvency problems of multiple trust funds set to be depleted by 2035 through the creation of "rescue committees," but the plan is dangerous for seniors, people with disabilities and others who rely on Social Security and Medicare.

The trusts impacted are Social Security Old-Age and Survivors Insurance, Social Security Disability Insurance, Medicare Hospital Insurance, and the Highway Trust Fund. Through these

"rescue committees," any fixes for these trusts that legislators agree upon is fast-tracked to a vote in the Senate. The secret process lacks transparency, which would allow for cuts to be made easily to these programs.

"Sen. Romney's track record on Social Security indicates his motive," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "In calling to raise the retirement age during the 2012 presidential campaign, he showed his true colors. He wants to cut Americans' hard-earned benefits. He is no friend of retirees."

[**ACTION ALERT: Send your Senators a message telling them to oppose earned benefit cuts and reject the Romney plan.**](#)

Trump Pushes Medicaid Block Grants, Allows States to Roll Back the Affordable Care Act

The administration is intensifying its assault on Medicaid by [converting some Medicaid funding into block grants](#). Under the proposed plan, states could request to receive fixed payments from the federal government for poor adults now covered under the Affordable

Care Act (ACA) Medicaid expansion. It would also allow states to limit benefits and drugs available for some beneficiaries.

“This drastically changes the way Medicaid is funded and will result in harsh benefit cuts that will hurt vulnerable Americans,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “It is the latest cruel scheme and it shirk responsibility for ensuring that every American has access to health care.”

Currently, the federal government matches state Medicaid spending. This allows anyone who has qualified for Medicaid benefits to receive them without delay. Funding automatically increases in times of need, such as economic downturns or when health care costs increase. However, fixed cost block grants will not increase, leaving states to cut benefits or the number of people who qualify for the program.

Despite renaming the program “Healthy Adult Opportunities,” the program erodes [the federal government’s commitment to protecting low-income Americans](#).

“The Administration’s plan also gives states the flexibility to cut what it spends on Medicaid or use the funding for non-health related things, including paying for other programs or financing tax cuts,” added Peters.

[A video of an Emergency Room doctor confronting Vice President Mike Pence](#) over Trump's Medicaid cuts has been viewed more than a million times.

Get ready for the 2020 Census

Filling out the census form is not only a civic responsibility but essential for determining how many representatives a community will have in Congress and how federal funding for health care and other critical services is distributed. Being counted is especially important for seniors.

The 2020 census will be conducted very differently than past ones. People will be pushed to fill in their census forms online. With this new system, experts are worried that older Americans won’t be able to or want to submit their information. [A survey found that 56% of those 65 and older are not comfortable with this online method.](#)

Between March 12 and 20, most households will receive a postcard with information on how to respond to the census online. Those who do not fill out the digital form will then receive a traditional form in the mail. If a household does not fill out the traditional form, a census taker will then be sent to collect the information in person. People in areas unlikely to have access to internet service will receive the traditional form in the mail instead of the postcard.

“Watch for the postcard in March and make sure you, your neighbors and family members are counted,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “The data collected will determine the distribution of billions in federal funds, including for Medicare Part B.”

The cost of not responding is high. [Learn more about the 2020 Census here.](#)

Iowa Alliance Calls out Broken Promises on Drug Prices

On Thursday, the Iowa [Lower Drug Prices Now](#) coalition, which includes the Alliance, launched their campaign to demand comprehensive reform to lower drug prices for

everyone. The coalition's mission includes ending Big Pharma's power to pad their profits by setting and keeping prices high.

The campaign held a news conference at the State Capitol in Des Moines on the same day that President **Trump** visited the state, serving as a reminder to voters of his many broken promises to curb skyrocketing drug costs and price gouging. Iowa Alliance members, state legislators, health care professionals, impacted lowans and labor representatives participated in the event

"30% of lowans reported that they had stopped taking medication as prescribed due to cost in 2017. The situation has only gotten worse since then," said Iowa Alliance president **Mike McCarthy**. "Americans pay the highest prescription drug prices in the world and we seniors bear the biggest burden."

"While the president and Senator **Joni Ernst** (IA) say they care about this issue, neither has taken real action," added **Jan Corderman**, Recording Secretary of the Iowa Alliance.

"Trump used to say that Medicare should negotiate prices, but he threatened to veto H.R. 3, a strong drug price negotiation bill passed by the House of Representatives, within hours of its passage in December."

Dates and Cities Announced for Alliance's Four Regional Conferences

The Alliance will hold its quadrennial regional conferences in the following cities:

- Midwest Regional Conference - April 27 - 28, 2020 in Detroit, Michigan
- Western Regional Conference - May 12 - 13, 2020 in Las Vegas, Nevada
- Northeast Regional Conference - May 28 - 29, 2020 in Washington, DC
- Southern Regional Conference- June 5 - 6, 2020 in Orlando, Florida

At each conference, attendees will elect four regional board members and prepare for the upcoming 2020 elections. [Additional information and registration is here](#). Questions? contact **Joni Jones** at either ARAConference@retiredamericans.org, jjones@retiredamericans.org or 888-373-6497.

Texas Alliance Holds Biennial Convention



State President **Tony Padilla** (IAMAW), Treasurer **Teresa Perez-Wisely** (AFSCME) and Secretary **Gene Lantz** (UAW) were all reelected at the Texas Alliance's convention last Friday. Executive Director Fiesta spoke about the Alliance's goals of expanding Social Security and reducing prescription drug prices, discussed the importance of the senior vote, and thanked the members for their dedication and activism.