

Retiree Issues and the State of the Union

President Trump used his State of the Union address to distort his record and pretend to be on the side of retirees. His record shows otherwise. Retirees cannot be lulled into a false sense of security based on empty promises. We must defend our earned retirement and health care benefits -- and fight for real and immediate action to lower drug prices.

#1. The president claims he won't cut Social Security and Medicare. He has repeatedly tried to do just that.

Every budget President Trump submitted to Congress (2017, 2018 and 2019) proposed billions of dollars in cuts to Medicare. Congress eventually blocked them, but had they passed beneficiaries would have paid more for less.

The Administration is working to make cuts to Social Security Disability Insurance, a core element of our Social Security system. Millions of Americans with severe disabilities will lose their small monthly benefits and others would have to jump through unnecessary and costly bureaucratic hoops if this plan is not stopped.

#2. He says drug prices are lower. Each year they have increased and in 2020 the average increase is 5%.

Four in ten older Americans report not filling at least one prescription because they could not afford it.

The President has failed to take any meaningful action to lower prescription drug costs. He abandoned his promise to allow Medicare to negotiate lower drug prices. *If Medicare had negotiated insulin prices in 2017 it would have saved taxpayers \$4.4 billion per year.* Instead President Trump issued a veto threat as soon as the House of Representatives passed a landmark drug price negotiation bill.

Escalating prescription drug prices, including insulin, are the fastest growing portion of Medicare's budget. Reducing them would dramatically strengthen the program and provide relief to millions of retirees.

#3. He claims people with pre-existing health conditions have been protected.

Protections for people with pre-existing health conditions are hanging by a thread. The president has asked the Supreme Court to eliminate those protections by striking down the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

Without the ACA, people with pre-existing conditions, most of whom are over the age of 50, will see their premiums skyrocket, putting affordable health care coverage out of reach for millions of Americans with conditions ranging from high blood pressure to cancer. The Administration has never proposed a solution that protects these Americans' health care despite claims to the contrary.