



FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

815 16th Street, NW, Fourth Floor • Washington, DC 20006 • 202.637.5399

www.retiredamericans.org

Spanish version: www.alianzadejubilados.org

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Trump Repeats His Plan to Cut Medicare and Social Security

At a town hall meeting broadcast by FOX News Thursday night, President **Trump** said [“we’ll be cutting” entitlements like Medicare and Social Security](#). While Trump had promised not to cut Medicare and Social Security as a candidate for president in 2016, the latest remarks are part of a disturbing pattern. He made similar comments in [Davos in January](#), and [several officials in his administration](#), including **Larry Kudlow**, Director of the National Economic Council, and **Mick Mulvaney**, Director of the Office of Management and Budget and acting White House Chief of Staff, have repeatedly called for cuts to earned-benefits programs.

“We should do the exact opposite of what the President is planning, and that means working to expand Social Security and increasing benefits for current and future retirees,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “We also need the Senate to pass H.R. 3, the Lower Drug Costs Now Act, so that it can be signed into law. It would add hearing, dental and vision benefits to Medicare.”

H.R. 3, passed by the House of Representatives last year, would not just expand Medicare - it would also save taxpayers billions of dollars by allowing Medicare to negotiate drug prices.

A Taxpayer-funded Vaccine Should be Affordable for Everyone



On Thursday, Maryland/DC Alliance Trustee and AFSCME retiree **Josephine Ball**, a retired nurse, joined Sen. **Chris Van Hollen** (Maryland), Reps. **Rosa DeLauro** (CT), **Lloyd Doggett** (TX) and **Jan Schakowsky** (IL) and allies from the Lower Drug Prices Now coalition at a Capitol Hill rally to call for affordable coronavirus drugs and prevent price gouging by pharmaceutical corporations. The event aimed to ensure that vaccines

Josephine Ball at podium with Rep. Schakowsky (left), Rep. Doggett (far right) and allies

or treatments for coronavirus developed with U.S. taxpayer dollars are reasonably priced and available to everyone.

If you have not already done so, tell Congress now that [any taxpayer-funded Coronavirus vaccine must be affordable for all who need it](#).

“We must follow the example of other countries that allow people to get the coronavirus care they need at little to no out-of-pocket cost to them,” said **Executive Director Fiesta**. “While Congress passing an \$8.3 billion coronavirus package is a good step, the government needs to cover all health care costs related to the coronavirus to get people the treatment they need and limit the spread of the virus.”

As the risk of coronavirus increases throughout the country, the Trump administration is now allowing Medicare and Medicaid to cover coronavirus testing costs. However, for [older Americans at greater risk](#), intensive treatment or hospital stays may contribute to large medical bills.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has [guidelines](#) for preventing the spread of the coronavirus and protecting yourself, including washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

Affordable Care Act Will Face Another Challenge in the Supreme Court

The U.S. Supreme Court decided this week to take up the third [Republican challenge to the Affordable Care Act](#) (ACA). The move is likely to keep coverage for pre-existing conditions at the front of voters’ minds during this pivotal election year.

The case has been added to the docket for the term that begins in October, with a decision likely to be announced in the spring of 2021 - well after the November election.



“This lawsuit could potentially end the Affordable Care Act’s protection for people with pre-existing conditions and rip insurance from 20 million Americans,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Alliance Secretary-Treasurer. “The Administration has been chipping away at the ACA and has offered no alternative to ensure that all Americans can get affordable health care.”

We urge older Americans to keep health care policy in mind as they consider which candidates to support in November.”

New Republican Bill Will Not Curb Drug Prices

Despite its name, the [Lower Costs, More Cures Act](#) (H.R. 19 and S. 3129), a health care and prescription drug pricing bill put forward by Republicans, does little to lower costs or create more cures.

Supporters claim that the bill will curb high health care costs and lower out-of-pocket expenses, but in reality it will do little. The bill would allow some seniors with large drug expenses to pay in monthly installments but does not lower the overall amount that must be paid.

The legislation does require more transparency about the costs of procedures and drugs, but knowing the costs up front will not make them more affordable. The bill does not constrain the prices that pharmaceutical corporations can charge for drugs, allowing for the continued price gouging of vulnerable Americans.

“This bill is deceptive. It will not help people with private insurance or Medicare beneficiaries with high Part B expenses,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, Alliance President. “The better approach is H.R. 3, the Lower Drug Costs Now Act, which will curb drug prices and lower costs for everyone, including seniors.”

Celebrating Women’s History Month and 100 Years Since Women Won Voting Rights

March is Women’s History Month, with International Women’s Day on March 8, and 2020 is the 100th anniversary of women securing the right to vote. The 19th Amendment was ratified on August 18, 1920, guaranteeing and protecting women’s constitutional right to vote.



During the 1820s and 30s, most states had extended the franchise to all white men, regardless of how much money or property they had. The Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 launched the suffrage movement, and women and their allies mobilized over the next 70 years to educate the public and fight for their

rights. [Black women were a key part of a diverse coalition](#) that eventually brought the women's vote to fruition, although it would be many decades before their right to fully exercise their votes was secured.

The final push for ratification included women lobbying Congress and President **Woodrow Wilson**, picketing at the White House, and going on hunger strikes when they were arrested. Millions of brave women joined the movement, including Alliance Executive Vice President **Jo Etta Brown**'s grandmother.

"One hundred years ago, what a challenge it was to march for the women's right to vote," said Executive Vice President Brown. "This most privileged right was won through dedication, determination and courage. Much of what I do is dedicated to my grandmother's memory and those heroic women I never knew."

Make Your Reservation Now for One of the Alliance's Four Regional Conferences

The Alliance's regional Meetings are an excellent opportunity to strengthen your skills as a retiree activist and connect with fellow advocates from your area. The four meetings will be held 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

March 20 is the deadline for booking rooms at the Alliance's negotiated rate for the MGM Grand Hotel in Detroit, site of the Midwest Regional Conference. The registration fee includes 2 breakfasts and a luncheon.

Four regional board members will be elected at each of these meetings. There will also be workshops on preparing for the 2020 elections, tools to reach voters, effective communication on retiree issues, and how to counter pharmaceutical corporation claims and effectively advocate for lower drug prices.

[Additional information and registration forms are here.](#) Questions? Contact **Joni Jones** at either ARAConference@retiredamericans.org, jjones@retiredamericans.org or 888-373-6497.