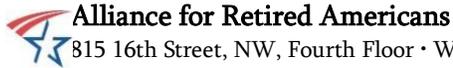




# FRIDAY ALERT



**Alliance for Retired Americans**

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**June 5, 2020**

## **A Message on Behalf of the Alliance for Retired Americans**

*The Alliance shares the pain of the entire country after witnessing the video of **George Floyd** dying in handcuffs with a knee on his neck despite his clear warning that he could not breathe. Seniors have been touched personally by the unnecessary tragic killing of another black man in police custody.*

*Older Americans are all too familiar with racism, having lived through the civil rights battles of the 1960's and then seen its ugly reappearance in their daily lives with every decade that followed. We cannot let this moment pass without seeing real change. Too many times we have galvanized, only to see the same disturbing patterns of racism, injustice and oppression return.*

***Terrence Floyd**, George's brother, set the tone for all of us this week when he led a crowd of protesters as they held both their hands in the air, the left with the peace sign and the right hand in a fist for justice. He has kept us focused on the real issues that confront black America and we should follow his example.*



*We want seniors everywhere and all our fellow Americans to know that we share your grief and your outrage, and we are committed to be a force for real and lasting change in this country.*

*Robert Roach, Jr.  
President, Alliance for Retired Americans*

## House Group Works to Cut Social Security and Medicare Behind Closed Doors

On Monday a bipartisan group of 60 House members, evenly divided among Republicans and Democrats, sent a [letter](#) to House leadership calling for measures to be included in the next coronavirus relief package to tackle the growing deficit.

The proposed committees, the brainchild of Sen. **Mitt Romney** (UT), would bypass the committees of jurisdiction over Social Security and Medicare — the House Committees on Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce and the Senate Committee on Finance.

The letter was written as economic experts are urging Congress [to keep spending](#) to meet the needs of the pandemic and the economic crisis while interest rates on federal borrowing are low.

The House members are requesting that the Government Accountability Office produce an annual report on the country's fiscal health. They also called for the inclusion of the TRUST Act (H.R. 4907) that would create the special congressional "rescue committees" to keep trust funds afloat. In reality, the TRUST Act creates [closed-door commissions to cut Social Security and Medicare](#). Once the respective Rescue Committees approve a trust fund bill, the legislation would receive expedited consideration in the House and Senate.

"This deficit demagoguery is just a smokescreen to achieve the dangerous goal of destroying our hard-earned Medicare and Social Security benefits," said **Richard Fiesta**, Alliance Executive Director. "That is the last thing we need during a public health and economic crisis. Americans overwhelmingly want and need these programs expanded."

## Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities are Taking Residents' Stimulus Checks

Recently the [Federal Trade Commission warned](#) that some long term care facilities are attempting to take the stimulus checks of residents on Medicaid. These nursing homes and assisted living facilities are forcing residents to sign their checks over to the facility by claiming that the facility gets to keep their stimulus check as "resources" for the federal health care program.

However, [tax law](#) states that tax credits don't, in fact, count as resources for federal benefit programs such as Medicaid. According to the CARES Act, the economic impact payments are a tax credit, and Congress defining the stimulus payments that way is supposed to ensure that the government cannot seize them.

**If a facility has taken the stimulus check of you or a loved one, contact your [state attorney general](#) and ask them to help you get it back.**

"It is disgraceful that any nursing facility would attempt to steal low-income residents' stimulus payments," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "Nursing homes and assisted living facilities cannot take money from residents just because they're on Medicaid."

## Administration Dispensed COVID-19 Drug to Hospitals that Didn't Need It

Early missteps by the **Trump** administration led to [delays in the initial distribution of the only approved drug treatment](#) to critically ill coronavirus patients.

After the drugmaker Gilead donated a batch of 607,000 vials of the promising coronavirus antiviral medication **Remdesivir** to the government, the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) oversaw the distribution. But in early May, some ended up at the wrong hospitals -- including hospitals with no ICUs and therefore no COVID-19 patients, as well as at facilities without the refrigeration capacity to store it, causing some to be sent back.



Because Remdesivir is the only approved treatment for severe COVID-19 cases and is in extremely short supply, any delay or reduced availability is catastrophic for coronavirus patients. Current understanding of the drug shows that the earlier severely ill patients receive the treatment the more effective it is.

“The administration’s mistake likely led to more people dying and it was completely avoidable,” said Executive Director **Fiesta**. “Americans need

competent leadership during this crisis, and distributing the only treatment we have to the wrong hospitals is the opposite of that.”

## Trump’s War on Health Care Makes Pandemic Extra Threatening for North Carolina Seniors

A [report from Protect Our Care \(POC\) and the Alliance](#) recently revealed that President Trump’s ongoing sabotage of seniors’ health care is especially dangerous for all Americans amid the coronavirus pandemic, exacerbating the crisis. Eighty percent of the more than 100,000 Americans who have died from the virus have been over the age of 65. The information is now being disseminated at the state level.

On Thursday, **Jocelyn Bryant**, Vice President of the North Carolina Alliance, joined State Senator **Wiley Nickel**, Action NC Executive Director **Pat McCoy** and POC-North Carolina State Director **Jonathan Coby** to brief the media about Trump’s war on health care and how it is harming North Carolina seniors facing the COVID-19 outbreak.

“It’s clear to me that President Trump just doesn’t care that seniors are most at risk from this deadly disease,” said Vice President Bryant. “He won’t even stand up to drug corporations to make coronavirus drugs or treatments developed at taxpayer expense affordable and available to all who need them.”