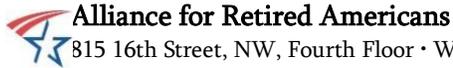




# FRIDAY ALERT



**Alliance for Retired Americans**

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## Alliance testifies at House Hearing on Social Security and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Alliance President **Robert Roach, Jr.** delivered testimony to the House Ways and Means Social Security Subcommittee Friday, highlighting the needs of seniors and all those who depend on Social Security amid the pandemic.

President Roach noted that Social Security benefits are helping to keep our economy afloat as the nation deals with the COVID-19 crisis and recommended expanding the program. Since seniors spend many of their benefits on housing, food, and medicine, Social Security puts \$1 trillion into the economy every year.



Chairman Larson

The pandemic has also created a new, serious Social Security issue for anyone who turns 60 in 2020. Called the “notch” issue, people born in 1960 will receive 5.9% percent lower benefits when they retire than people born in 1959 -- unless Congress takes action. In his testimony, he thanked Subcommittee Chairman **John Larson (CT)** for recognizing the issue and introducing legislation that addresses it.

“The notch will have a harmful and permanent effect on these beneficiaries regardless of whether they worked, lost their job, or didn’t work at all this year,” said President Roach. “That’s unfair to those workers. The pandemic reinforces the need to strengthen retirement security for all older Americans by fixing the notch, and expanding benefits.”

President Roach also spoke about the participation of older Americans in the workforce. Nearly a quarter of retail employees are 55 or older and seven percent are over 65. Some have lost their jobs due to the coronavirus recession or are still on the job but risking their health.

“Strengthening and expanding Social Security is part of the solution to this crisis. We needed it before the pandemic, and we especially need it now,” President Roach added.

## Urgent Action Needed - Stop President Trump's New Attack on Social Security

As Congress debates a new coronavirus stimulus package, the White House is attacking Social Security's dedicated funding. This weakens the system's solvency and puts future benefits at risk. It also does nothing to help unemployed Americans or the economy.

White House advisors say President **Trump** will veto any coronavirus relief from Congress that does not include this Social Security cut. They are insisting that Senate Majority Leader **Mitch McConnell** include it in the legislation.

Cutting Social Security's funding -- during a pandemic -- is dangerous. Congress must say NO.

**Please sign our petition. [We must stop this before it's too late.](#)**

## Millions of Americans Have Lost Health Insurance in Pandemic, New Study Finds

A new [study](#) from Families USA, a nonpartisan advocacy group, found that 5.4 million American workers lost their health insurance between February and May in the pandemic-driven recession.

More adults have become uninsured from job losses during this four-month period than have ever lost coverage in a single year. During the Great Recession 3.9 million adults lost coverage between 2008 and 2009.

The Kaiser Family Foundation reports that 27 million Americans are now uninsured, with more people lacking insurance than ever before.

Insuring the recently unemployed is a challenge because many people cannot afford the premiums for coverage through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) or COBRA, while others might not know they are eligible for Medicaid. People who have lost their insurance, on top of losing their income, could also face staggering medical bills if they become infected with COVID-19.



Despite the need for action to insure those who have lost coverage, the Trump Administration continues to [challenge the ACA](#) in court.

“This is the worst economic downturn since World War II, larger by far than the Great Recession,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary Treasurer of the Alliance. “President Trump’s attempts to dismantle health care safety nets when they are needed most is disgraceful.”

A key part of the ACA is its protection for people with pre-existing conditions. Those provisions are especially significant for older Americans, since among those 55 to 64, [84 percent have at least one pre-existing condition](#).

“While the Supreme Court is now unlikely to hear the case before Election Day, the lawsuit and the health care law will feature prominently in the November elections, as they should,” said Alliance Executive Director **Richard Fiesta**. “All Americans have the right to affordable health care and need to keep their elected officials’ records in mind when they go to vote.”

## **Executive Board Member Doug Hart Submits Testimony to DNC Platform Committee**

The Democratic National Convention is finalizing the party platform. On Tuesday, Alliance executive board member **Doug Hart** provided testimony to the Platform Committee urging them to include retirement security in their deliberations.

Mr. Hart, of Tempe, Arizona, was raised on Social Security survivor benefits after his father died from World War II injuries. He noted that his family would have been unable to keep a roof over their heads or food on the table without those benefits. Since today's modest benefits do not keep up with inflation, he called for the expansion of Social Security benefits to be included in the platform. Those benefits are critical to families now as well as current and future retirees.

He also shared his first hand experience with skyrocketing prescription drug prices: he pays \$6,000 per year out of pocket for his medications. "The Democratic Platform must call for real action to rein in the drug corporations' monopoly power to set prices and it must require Medicare to negotiate lower drug prices for beneficiaries and taxpayers," he urged.

He noted that accessible and affordable medications are more important than ever amid the coronavirus pandemic and expressed his dismay that no strings are attached to the billions of taxpayer dollars invested in the research and development of prescription drugs. Since pharmaceutical corporations can charge whatever price they want, Hart called for all taxpayer-funded drugs to be affordable and available to all who need them.

"Seniors deserve a secure retirement, and Democrats need to make it a reality," said Hart. "After a lifetime of hard work helping to build this nation, the government needs to have our backs."

## **Arizona President Sandra Cole Joins Press Call About Trump's Failure to Protect Seniors**

On Thursday, Arizona Alliance President **Sandra Cole** joined Rep. **Donna Shalala** (FL) and Democratic National Committee Chairman **Tom Perez** on a press call on the failure of the Administration to protect older Americans during the pandemic. They noted that seniors have been misled about the risk of coronavirus by the White House, jeopardizing their health, with repeated claims that the virus would "disappear." This was compounded by a rush to "reopen the country" without the necessary safety measures.

Ms. Cole said that Trump's policies have added to the depression and anxiety felt by many seniors as she noted that some of her own family members are essential workers on the front lines. She also stated that the pressure from Washington to reopen schools or risk their education funding is a seniors issue.

"Many grandparents are raising their grandchildren, or provide child care so that parents can work. Their safety, as well as that of children, teachers and school staff, must be taken into account," she said.