



# FRIDAY ALERT



**Alliance for Retired Americans**

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[www.retiredamericans.org](http://www.retiredamericans.org)

Spanish version: [www.alianzadejubilados.org](http://www.alianzadejubilados.org)

**September 18, 2020**

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## **Alliance Secures Major Voting Rights Victories in Michigan and Pennsylvania**

Lawsuits brought by the Michigan and Pennsylvania Alliance chapters mean that older voters in both states can cast their ballots by mail and be sure they will be counted.

On Friday, [the Michigan Court of Claims ruled](#) that any ballot postmarked by November 2, and received by November 17, will be counted. The ruling came in a lawsuit brought by the Michigan Alliance. The Court also ruled that Michigan voters can get assistance from anyone they choose to return their ballots by hand to local clerks from the Friday before Election Day until the close of polls. This provides another convenient way for older voters, many of whom do not drive, to return their ballots.

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court Thursday ruled [in favor of Alliance retiree demands for mail ballots](#) that any ballot postmarked by Election Day must be counted if it is received within 3 days after Election Day.

The Pennsylvania Court also ruled that it is legal to use drop boxes for ballot returns in Pennsylvania, rather than relying solely on the U.S. Postal Service, and Pennsylvania counties can now provide multiple ballot boxes in their jurisdiction. This provides another convenient way for older voters to return their ballots.

The Alliance's Pennsylvania case, *Crossey v. Boockvar*, was filed April 22, 2020 in Commonwealth Court and included four Pennsylvania Alliance for Retired Americans members who are plaintiffs: **Michael Crossey, Dwayne Thomas, Irwin Weinreich, and Brenda Weinreich**. In August, the Pennsylvania Attorney General asked the Court for the 3-day ballot receipt extension. Thursday's ruling was in a case brought by the Pennsylvania Democratic Party and included the proposed relief in the Alliance case.

"The Pennsylvania and Michigan courts agree that voters should be able to vote by mail and know that their ballot will be counted," said Executive Director **Fiesta**. "This is especially critical for the two million Pennsylvania voters and 1.6 million Michigan voters who are over the age of 65 and whose health is most at risk during the COVID-19 pandemic."

## Compare Biden, Trump on Seniors Issues

On Wednesday, the Alliance published [a concise two-page comparison](#) which documents how each candidate for president stacks up on 11 different retiree issues. The comparison details their positions on Social Security, prescription drugs, Medicare, health care and long term care and provides links to non-partisan sources to back up the information.

“When you consider their records and plans for the future, it becomes clear that **Joe Biden** and **Donald Trump** have completely different visions and that seniors have a lot at stake in the election,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “We encourage readers to review it and find out where they stand on retiree issues, then plan for how to vote in this election. You can make sure you are registered and find out what your options are for voting in your community by visiting [vote.org](#).”

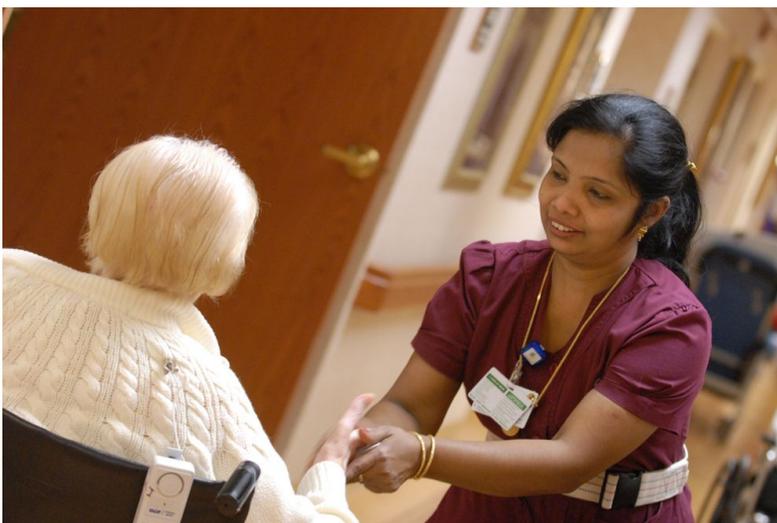
## Know Your Voting Choices and Vote Stress-Free



A record breaking number of voters are expected to take advantage of the expanded vote by mail options during the coronavirus pandemic. Some states still require that your ballot be received by Election Day, while others allow ballots to be counted as long as they are postmarked by November 3. To double check the rules in your state and formulate a plan in advance for how you will vote, go to [www.vote.org](#).

“Many seniors like that you can vote-by-mail safely from your own home,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “Others prefer to vote early in-person, or even on Election Day. What matters is that everyone makes a plan for how they will cast their ballot.”

## Mortality Rates from Covid-19 are Lower in Unionized Nursing Homes



Residents in nursing homes have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, with more than forty percent of all reported Covid-19 deaths in the United States occurring in nursing homes. A [recent study](#) published in *Health Affairs* looked at how the presence of health care worker unions influenced outcomes.

The study found that among 355 nursing homes in New York State for which data on COVID-19 mortality rates were available, the presence of a union health care worker was associated with a 30%

lower mortality rate from COVID-19 among residents. Among the reasons were labor unions’ advocating for access to personal protective equipment and new infection control policies.

“By increasing access to this equipment, labor unions helped reduce the spread of Covid-19 between health care workers and nursing home residents, dramatically reducing mortality rates,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance.

## **Florida Alliance Holds Annual Meeting with Distinguished Speakers, Awards Dedicated Volunteers**

AFL-CIO President **Richard Trumka**, former Senator **Bill Nelson**, President **Roach**, Florida Alliance (FLARA) President **Bill Sauers**, and FLARA Recording Secretary **Barbara DeVane** all addressed the Florida Alliance’s virtual annual meeting Wednesday and Thursday. Rep. **Debbie Wasserman Schultz** addressed the attendees and received the Alliance endorsement for re-election to Congress. Executive Director **Fiesta** provided an update on the 2020 senior vote.

Five FLARA members were recognized with awards for their volunteerism and dedication. **Felicia Bruce** and **Tony Kiwak** were honored with the President’s Lifetime Achievement Award. **Dave Jacobsen** and **Richard Polangin** earned the **Tony Fransetta** Outstanding Senior Advocate Award, while **Beverly Curphey** received the **J.W. Strickland** Award for Dedication to Others.

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The Alliance for Retired Americans is a national organization that advocates for the rights and well-being of over 4.4 million retirees and their families.