



FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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January 15, 2021

Biden's COVID-19 Relief Package Will Accelerate Vaccine Distribution

President-elect Biden laid out a [\\$1.9 trillion COVID-19 aid plan](#) Thursday to improve vaccine distribution, provide direct payments to Americans and assist state and local governments. The wide-ranging package will address the important health and economic crises Biden will confront once he is inaugurated on Wednesday, with a major focus on coronavirus testing and vaccine production and delivery as the pandemic surges.

The plan also enhances unemployment insurance and provides COBRA subsidies, an eviction moratorium, expanded paid leave and a much-needed Occupational Safety and Health Administration emergency temporary standard for infectious disease.

"This plan will provide tremendous relief to retirees and active workers alike," said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. "Congress should pass it immediately."

Highest Earners Already Paid their Social Security Taxes for the Year

The cap on earnings subject to the Social Security payroll tax is \$142,800 in 2021, and 4,000 people who earn over \$10 million per year [paid their Social Security tax for the year](#) by January 4.

According to *Barrons*, [taxing earnings above \\$400,000](#) would boost Social Security revenue by 7% in 2021 and would then increase revenue enough gradually to keep the Social Security Trust Fund solvent until 2040. About 5.4% of workers earn more than the Social Security cap.

"Raising the Social Security earnings cap would go a long way toward eliminating elderly poverty in the nation," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "It remains outrageous that workers earning hourly wages pay a much higher percentage of their income into Social Security than millionaires and billionaires."

AFL-CIO President Trumka Introduces Workers First Agenda: Five Priorities for 2021

On Tuesday, AFL-CIO President **Richard Trumka** introduced the [Workers First Agenda](#) to fight back against COVID-19 and build an economy that puts more power and prosperity into the hands of working people.

The Workers First Agenda urges the incoming Biden administration and Congress to seize the opportunity this year to transform the lives of working people by addressing worker empowerment; worker safety and the pandemic; good jobs and public investment; racial justice and democracy; and economic security.

The agenda urges Congress and the new administration to focus on numerous retiree issues by providing pension funding relief; increasing Social Security benefits across the board; reducing prescription drug prices; lowering the Medicare eligibility age to 50; creating a public healthcare option; strengthening the Affordable Care Act; rebuilding the unemployment insurance system; and establishing postal banking.

“It is no accident that the plan focuses heavily on issues important to seniors,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “Union retirees know well that the better you work, the better you retire. The two have long been linked inextricably.”

Celebrating Martin Luther King Jr. Day with Messages of Hope and Equality

Martin Luther King Jr. Day is Monday, January 18. Dr. King’s message and work are as relevant today as they were during his lifetime.



The Rev. Ralph Abernathy, right, and Bishop Julian Smith, left, flank Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., during a civil rights march in Memphis, Tenn., March 28, 1968. (AP Photo/Jack Thornell)

Senator-elect **Raphael Warnock**, senior pastor at Atlanta’s Ebenezer Baptist church, invoked Dr. King as he [condemned the acts of hate](#) in the U.S. Capitol on January 6 during his first sermon since being elected. Dr. King was a pastor at the same church.

"So there is victory in this moment, there is violence in this moment, there is fantastic opportunity and fierce opposition, and it reminds us that there is still a whole lot of work to do," said Rev. Warnock.

"It is critical that we remember Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy and wisdom as we confront our nation's history and the insurrection and rioting last week," said **President Roach**. "I encourage all of us to take Monday to reflect on Dr. King's messages of justice, equality, and opportunity and recommit to the cause of racial justice."

Obituary: Former Alliance Regional Board Member Kenyon Lauten Pease Jr., 1943 - 2021



on Capitol Hill, June, 2019

[Kenyon Lauten \(Ken\) Pease Jr., of Fairfax, Virginia, passed away](#) on January 2, 2021 at age 77. An American Postal Workers Union (APWU) retiree, he was an active Alliance Regional Board and Virginia Alliance member who spoke a number of times on Capitol Hill about issues important to seniors. He is survived by his wife of 36 years, **Cindy Pease**, six children and six grandchildren.

Ken served in the U.S. Army and Air Force and also as President of his Local Jaycees Chapter, developing leadership skills through community service. Later he became President of his Local APWU and an APWU National Officer. He retired after thirty years with the U.S. Postal Service.

"We called on Ken many times to speak to Congress and the public on a variety of issues important to retirees, including Social Security, Medicare, drug prices, and the Affordable Care Act," said Executive Ken Pease at Lower Drug Prices Now Rally

Director Fiesta. "He always represented the Alliance and our members with his eloquence, kindness and dignity. He will be greatly missed and long remembered."

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.