



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 Administration Spending its Last Weeks in Office on Social Security Cuts

This week the Social Security Administration (SSA) sent the **Trump** administration's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) a [proposal that, if implemented](#), could prevent nearly half a million Americans from receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits. As of now, SSA is required to consider age, education and work experience when determining whether a person meets the statutory definition of disability. Social Security experts say the proposal is likely to change the formula and eliminate one's age from the equation. This change would make it harder for seniors to qualify, and could push thousands into poverty.

"This is outrageous. The Trump Administration could pull the rug out from millions of Americans, especially older Americans, in the waning days of its Administration," said Alliance Executive Director **Richard Fiesta**. "Since the day he took office, President Trump has claimed he would protect Social Security. He is showing his true colors again."

"We are in a pandemic that is hitting older Americans the hardest. Our government should be helping Americans who can no longer work due to a disability, not scheming to deny them the benefits they have earned over a lifetime of hard work," Fiesta added.

Biden Taps Retiree Hero Xavier Becerra for Key Position



On Monday, President-Elect **Joe Biden** announced that he selected **Xavier Becerra**, a former congressman who earned a 99% lifetime pro-retiree record in the Alliance's annual Congressional Voting Record, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Becerra, a strong ally of retirees, was the Ranking Democrat on the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Social Security from 2011–2017. If confirmed, he will run the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

Xavier Becerra

(CMS), set rules governing nursing homes, and implement the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Becerra is a long-time proponent of the ACA and will lead the Biden Administration's effort to protect and strengthen the program that provides health insurance for millions of Americans.

“The ACA has been life-changing and now through this pandemic, we can all see the value in having greater access to quality health care at affordable prices,” said Becerra. “Now is not the time to rip away our best tool to address very real and very deadly health disparities in our communities.”

President-elect Biden also nominated **Dr. Rochelle Walensky** as the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Walensky is currently the chief of infectious diseases at Massachusetts General Hospital and a Harvard Medical School professor.

“We are confident that this is the team who will not only defeat the pandemic but work to improve and protect Medicare and Medicaid,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “After years of assault on the retirement health benefits we have earned, this change could not be more welcome.”

Covid-19 Vaccines are on the Way. Here’s what Seniors Can Expect.

The Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) advisory panel evaluated Pfizer’s Covid-19 vaccine on Thursday and voted 17 to 4, with one member abstaining, in favor of its emergency authorization for people 16 and older. With rare exceptions, the FDA follows the advice of its advisory panels.



Moderna’s vaccine is expected to go before the panel on December 17th. Both vaccines have been highly effective in preventing the spread of the virus [in adults aged 65 and older tested so far](#), but some questions regarding how the vaccines will specifically affect seniors remain unanswered. Federal officials have said that side effects would be closely monitored during the upcoming trials.

Seniors in nursing homes and assisted living centers will be among the first Americans vaccinated, following recommendations last week by a federal advisory panel. Older adults living at home will have to wait a while longer.

Among the issues that remain are concerns about side effects and whether the vaccines offer meaningful protection to seniors who are frail or have multiple chronic illnesses.

“Effective vaccines are critical to ending this pandemic in the United States, but they are only one part of the solution,” said **President Roach**. “We must stay vigilant, remain physically distant as much as possible, and always wear masks when we are near others.”

Early Voting for the Georgia Senate Runoffs Begins Monday

Alliance members and retirees from participating unions continue to take part in a series of phone banks to help **Jon Ossoff** and **Raphael Warnock** win their respective Senate races in Georgia. If you live in Georgia you can confirm your polling location at www.georgia.gov.

The next phone bank shift will be on Tuesday, December 15th at 2:00 Eastern Time, and you do not need to live in Georgia to participate and call Alliance members in the state. Click [here](#) to sign up.

The Alliance has also prepared comparisons on where the candidates stand on issues important to retirees: [the Raphael Warnock-Kelly Loeffler comparison is here](#) and the [Jon Ossoff-David Perdue comparison is here](#).

Early voting begins on December 14 and Election Day is January 5, 2021.

“If Jon Ossoff and Reverend Warnock win, we can stop current Senate Majority Leader **Mitch McConnell**, **Kelly Loeffler** and **David Perdue** from trying to cut our hard earned Social Security benefits,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “With a Democratic Senate, expanding Social Security and strengthening retirement security is possible. The stakes could not be higher.”

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.